THE ADVENTURES OF

Johnny Appleseed

HENRY CHAPIN

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THE ADVENTURES
of
Johnny Appleseed

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Johnny Appleseed

by
HENRY CHAPIN

Illustrations by
JAMES DAUGHERTY

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THE LOCAL HISTORY
OF
CARLTON COUNTY
AND
THE WAYS AND MEANS
FOR
ITS IMPROVEMENT

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For

CHARLOTTE SCOTT CHAPIN

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THE ADVENTURES
of
Johnny Appleseed

I

Springfield

LONG ago while George Washington was still alive an apple tree stood beside a log cabin on the banks of the Connecticut river. It was May and the tree was like a small cloud suddenly come down upon the green hill. There was a rustling in the snowy mass of blossoms and the contented hum of bees turned to angry buzzing. The boughs shook down an unexpected shower of white petals, and cutting through their easy zig-zag flight, a small boy fell flop upon the grass and lay sprawling on his back fighting for breath.

A moment, and he was on his feet, rubbing a sore elbow and swallowing his fright. He was a rugged boy with deep-set hazel eyes—not more than five or six years old. Presently he walked over to a barrel propped against the trunk, and a second time carefully pulled himself out of sight into the sweet-smelling tree.

From behind the near-by cabin in the

doorway of a shop, his father had been quietly watching. As soon as he saw the tumble amounted to nothing, he stepped back into the shadow and waited. When his son tackled the tree again, the man smiled and turned to his tools. "Johnny's full of stuff," he thought proudly, and as he went on with his carpentry, Nathaniel Chapman puzzled over what it was in his son that made him so persistent about his own design; and he wondered what charm dwelt in apple trees to hold the boy away from play with other children.

Meanwhile Jonathan sat firmly astride the strong bough of the tree and watched the bees force their fuzzy bodies deep into the flowers, until they were all befuddled with nectar and pollen dust. He hummed to himself, full of bliss, lost for the time in a fragrant and private world.

Sometimes a boy when he first sniffs the tang of salt and hears the beat of ocean surf will suddenly look out at the white sails against the horizon and never be easy again upon the land. Another, seeing the sharp edge of a mountain crest will all his life search out more distant, and higher summits wanting to know what the world looks like from the peak beyond. Johnny found

charm in homelier things and without knowing how or why, even as a child, his life shaped itself towards a certain course of adventure.

Now about the time the farmers of Concord and Lexington were creeping along behind stone walls sniping at the red coats of the British, Jonathan Chapman was born where his father's cabin sent up its smoke by the Connecticut River one hundred miles west of the ocean.

At this time his father, who was away with the Minute Men, was forty-five years old. His mother Mary was thirty years old and near the end of her life. She died four years after bearing her son. The village of Springfield, marking the western end of the Bay Path, had been settled one hundred and forty years, and people had lived up and down the Connecticut valley for a century and a half.

This was a very long time for a pioneering people. By the time Jonathan Chapman was born, a spirit was beginning to be felt that this place had been too much lived in. Jonathan as he grew up was to feel this spirit more than most.

Johnny's father came back from the war to his lonely house and he too felt the uncer-

tainty and restless quality of the times. But he was too tired to seek relief in fresh adventure. He was an easy-going man and wanted peace. He settled back at his trade of carpentry and wood-working with one desire left in life, and that was to rear up his boy successfully into manhood. He trained him to be a student of the wild, to love nature and to fear no living thing. He read the Bible a great deal to the boy and so to begin with, Johnny was rather solemn.

He loved to spend hours watching his father turn wooden bowls and plates out of beech wood and the knots of white ash and sugar maple. When Johnny was eight he went one day into the woods on Springfield hill above the village, scouting out places where his father could get good big knots from the ash trees and red oak. He did not dream that nearly eight hundred years before him in the year one thousand, Freydis, a Viking woman, half-sister of Lief Ericson, sailed back to Greenland from the Maine coast with a boatload of just such knots of ash and oak.

Johnny divided his time between the wilderness beyond the dooryard and playing among the clean-smelling chips and shavings of his father's shop. He liked to see

bowl or plate or rolling-pin take living shape as his father deftly reemed out the hollow surfaces. After a while he learned to help his father peddle this woodenware in the village or as far away as Holyoke or Hadley. Johnny's father like most carpenters and handy men whistled softly to himself when he worked. The boy liked him for this. It was like a hand laid upon his shoulder for company. But of course Johnny and his father were not really as much apart from the village and to themselves as it seemed.

From a tree on the eastern slope above the Court House Square one brisk November day, the fall of 1782, Johnny looked down on the main street of the village. He saw the militia men ranked about the Court House with the white cockades of paper in their hats. He heard the squeal of fifes, the restless rattle of drumbeats and waited breathless while Daniel Shay and his ragged army swung down from the North End and paraded back and forth under the shining bayonets of the state troops.

The court did not sit. No debtors that fall were thrown into prison, no more men had their ears clipped in the public square because they could not meet their bills.

Johnny felt that the rebels must be right. Why? Because he knew that his father could buy very little food with the paper money men gave him for his work. He knew other poor people who had coppers and when they took the coppers to the store even in handfuls, they got very little real food or clothing in exchange. Moreover, Shay, leader of the rebels, was a brave and handsome officer who had made a gallant record in Washington's armies. Most of Shay's men were ex-soldiers, too, his father told him.

When the January snow lay knee-deep in the woods and the highways of the western countries, Johnny sat shivering with the terror of the times beside his father in their cabin listening for the fateful sound of cannon from the Arsenal Hill. They heard the loud re-echoing shots, sudden faint waves of turmoil and shouting, and then silence again. Shay, unable to rally his men, fled into the hill towns leaving the front rank spilling their warm blood into the white snow. Thanks to the merchants of Boston, well armed and well fed militia under General Shepherd stopped this rebellion of the hungry.

"War always means this," said Johnny's

father, "and when the armies come home sometimes the job is just begun. If things get worse, we will move off into the wilderness. I wouldn't take a human life for all the possessions in the world."

When it came to choosing between men who tore up paper from the counters of the shop keepers for a sign, or those who clipped bits of hemlock bough from the mountain glens and stuck them in their hats, Johnny was for the hemlock men every time.

Springfield because of its position at the western end of Bay Path was a center for all that happened in the state. Commencing with the dramatic days of Shay's Rebellion, Johnny took his time to find out things, to watch the flow of life from east to west and back again, as the oxteams of the pioneers, the stage coaches of rich travelers, the pack horse of the peddler left their mark in the mud of Main Street.

In the winter of 1785, a wonderful thing happened. A returned settler from the Wyoming valley on the far banks of the Susquehanna came home to rest in his father's cabin. It happened this way. Johnny's father gave him some snowshoes for Christmas. At the first big snowfall, he

slipped on his soft doeskin moccasins, and strapping on the shoes, went plowing silently up to the center of the town to look at tracks and read what animals had dared to come in near the cabins at night. Near the old brick Pynchon house, by the junction of the Bay Road with Main Street, he halted at sight of a horse and rider coming slowly up from the river bridge. Both horse and rider seemed made of snow. The horse, tired to death, dragged each weary foot up out of the fluffy drifts as if the snow were heavy clay. The man on his back slouched forward over the saddle and bumped along halfway between waking and sleeping.

Johnny felt as if he were seeing a ghost. There was no sound. He and the approaching rider were the only human beings in sight. As the horse came up to the boy at the crossroad, the animal stopped. The lack of motion waked the rider from his stupor. He brushed back the frosted snow from his hair and beard and looked deeply at Johnny. "This is Springfield, isn't it, lad?" was what he said.

"Yes, sir," said Johnny.

"Who is living here now?" the man asked.

"Why, we do," was all Johnny could think of for an answer.

"Your name?" asked the man.

"Jonathan Chapman."

"Your father?" asked the man this time with a show of interest.

"Nathaniel Chapman, the carpenter," said Johnny with some pride.

"Please take me to him," the man said. "I was his friend once. We're cold." He urged the horse to a walk and followed the boy back to the south end by Mill River where the cabin stood. Johnny was too excited to speak, and the man relapsed again into his absent mood.

Johnny stood by when his father rushed out, called the rider by name after looking hard at his haggard face, and helped him into the cabin to a place by the fire. Johnny put the horse in the shed, brushed him down and threw a blanket over his steaming flanks. Then he hurried indoors. His father was making a hot rum toddy for the traveller, whose name was Ezekiel Gore. He had left Springfield years before when he was Johnny's age, to go with his family to the Wyoming valley. Little by little, he told his story.

In the early days of the Revolution,

Brandt with his Mohawks and Queen Esther Montour came down from Tioga, the Iroquois fort, and wiped out the settlement. Gore's wife and two children were killed. He had come back, however, when the war was over and rebuilt his homestead. The land was too rich to leave. But within a year a great ice-dam formed on the Susquehanna and when spring broke, the little settlement of Connecticut river Yankees was a second time wiped out of existence. Again they were ready to rebuild, but the Pennsylvania Dutchmen who hated the Yankee foreigners, sent over soldiers and under the pretense of keeping order, drove every man and woman of the settlement back into the mountain paths, pointing them eastward. Some in organized armed bands had started back to fight for their homes, but Gore was through. With no family to fight for, his spirit could stand no further hardships.

Shay's Rebellion, Johnny decided, was a gentle and understandable affair compared with the stupid cruelty of the Pennsylvanians. Alas, that even way out there in the wilderness men were as hungry for parcels of land and ready to shed blood over

property. Johnny might have been discouraged from ever turning his thoughts toward a western pilgrimage if Gore had not gone on with other tales. The returned traveller spent the winter in the Chapman cabin, and around the fireside, he painted many pictures that gripped the boy's mind.

Beyond Sideling Hills, beyond Chestnut Ridge, beyond the Bald Eagle Mountains, the beginnings of the Ohio river flow southwest. Here are rich prairies where the black soil is six feet deep. Buffalo roam those pastures. The woods grow up weaving their dark crowns a hundred feet above the earth. There is perpetual twilight in these forests and no undergrowth. The climate on the banks of this great river is tempered. Its winters are not harsh like New England. The settlers there are few, and much too absorbed in tilling the rich land to fight each other. There by the Ohio is the frontier of the white man's adventure westward.

The red men are there too to be sure. But Johnny knows no fear of red men. He understands their dark and devious natures. He dreams on of the Ohio country and listens to Gore. He says nothing.

That spring, in May, Johnny was ten

years old. He felt he had come a long way through life. His father smiled—"All right, when I make my next trip to Holyoke, you can be a traveller, too, and I'll take you up Mount Tom."

II

Looking West

THIS mountain-look was the beginning of a new stretch of life for Johnny. He had almost forgotten his most vivid first memory of his fall from the apple tree.

At the crack of dawn, father and son left the tavern by the falls of Holyoke and went out beyond the town to the foot of the mountain. Turning to rest as they climbed, they looked down where the river mists lay at their feet, like milk in a bowl. Then they took up the hard pull along the rocky ridge.

It was a job for a boy, but when he felt the cool breeze sweeping over the crest, Johnny forgot his tired legs, the danger of rattlesnakes and the wetness that soaked him from the sassafras and laurel. Below, the river twined in a great silver-shining oxbow. Westward, before his wide eyes, Johnny saw an ocean of broken forested highlands rising, as they slouched away into the full blue curtain of the Berkshire Hills. Now at last he saw with his own eyes what

hedged in Springfield from the west. His heart leaped beyond these inward turning slopes.

And he imagined he saw there, under the forest, the hidden thread of the Mohawk Trail leading to the Hudson and beyond even to the country of the Iroquois. Something certain snapped to life in his mind. But he did not wish to hurt his father. He was canny. He did not speak of parting. He said nothing.

Yet Nathaniel Chapman knew what was happening to his son. He had expected it. He was not a father to stand between his boy and a free choice in life. Each generation of men, he knew, must set its own horizon and find its own limits. But it hurt. He pulled at Johnny's arm. "Come along now, lad," he said. "Enough is enough. Let's get along home."

Now that Johnny knew what he wanted to do with himself once he got big enough, he commenced to discover many things. First with his father's permission he visited the Agawam Indians at their summer camp near the Feeding Hills. Their leader was friendly with Nathaniel Chapman and liked his boy. So Johnny crossed over the river

one afternoon and hiked the six miles to the Indian encampment.

His father trusted him. He had trained his son to take care of himself. He knew that Johnny was familiar with every bit of forest and meadow land within six or seven miles of the village. But when Johnny

failed to show up again after the second night, Chapman decided to go and get him. He had no special love for Indians. He could remember back too far. And it gave him a kind of shivers.

At dusk, Chapman came to an open glade by the Agawam river where the wigwams of the red men stood in a circle like so many huge stacks of corn. A fire in the center of the camp threw out sudden arms of light.

There standing between him and the fire, he saw the dark figures of two Indians and the small intent shadow of his son. He was glad to see the boy again, but hid his feelings. He smoked a pipe with the two red men and then started home with Johnny.

They paced along the woods road noiselessly, each one occupied with his own thoughts. Johnny was puzzled and a little hurt by the reserve he felt in his father towards the Indians. He noticed that almost all white men had it. It was common to speak of the Reds as vermin. Nobody wanted them around. The boy liked them. They told him many things he could not get even from his father. They had a mysterious knowledge of the daily life-and-death events of the wildwood. They gave him a strange sense of animal power.

He liked the way they had of speaking of nature as "The Book of the Creature." From them, he learned how to understand The Book of the Creature; how to read the voice of God in every special noise from the ripple of brooks to the terrible sound of thunder, or the gentle hush-hush of the blinding snows. The red man considered himself a part of the Book of the Creature. Nowhere was there a dividing line as there

was when the men of Springfield spoke of men and the animals.

The white men talked as conquerors who were above nature. They boasted themselves the masters of nature, and in so doing, Johnny suspected they missed much that was going on in the world about them. The white man sought religion in the ancient Jewish book, the Bible. The Indian sought religion in the living chapters season by season spread out around him in this other book, the Book of the Creature. Perhaps that was why the two races could never understand each other.

While Johnny pondered quietly to himself, his father was wondering just how good it was for Johnny to play around with these wild men. He marvelled that the boy semed to lack all natural antipathy for the strong-smelling, glint-eyed, flea-ridden forest dwellers. And he remembered how in his own youth he had once seen a blond squaw walk proudly through the town to the meetinghouse at Longmeadow. She was a white woman called Eunice Williams, blood sister to the pastor of the Longmeadow church. All the pastor's offer of house and lands, and free education for her children, did not keep her from returning to

the Huron village of her adoption. Eunice had been taken in the famous raid on Deerfield when only seven years old. She had found the Book of the Creature to her liking and no longer remembered the English tongue.

What Johnny's father did not know was that the half-breed grandson of this Deerfield girl, one Reverend Eleazer Williams, would be famous as pretender to the title of the lost Dauphin of France. Yet Johnny years afterwards, met this very Williams by the headwaters of the Mississippi. So do loose ends tie up in strange ways.

When they came back to the cabin, Nathaniel Chapman turned quiet eyes upon his son. "Johnny," he said, "I know now that some day you will be going off westward. My feet have come this far and can go no further, so I'll speak of this now and then never another word. I hope you can wait until I'm dead and gone, as I'd be sore hit to live on without you here."

Two years went by and Johnny came along fast, growing into manhood. The summer of his twelfth year he stood in the doorway of the cabin and watched a procession of slow-moving canvas-covered wagons creak by following south along the

river towards Hartford. This was the pioneer band of ex-army officers and their families going out with Manasseh Cutler from Ipswich near Boston to the new settlement of Marietta on the Ohio river. His heart pounded. He wanted to go off with them at once.

But knowing he could not while his father still needed him, he merely planned for the time when he could. Days and nights he spent in the woods with his friends the Indians. He liked to test his endurance of hardship. He could travel far afoot on a handful of cornmeal and scraps of dried meat. There were other things he would not do. He could not bring himself to trap or kill the creatures of the forest, as long as he had food and clothing at command.

This life outdoors, this training of his growing body to be one with the wilderness, began to tell. He became a lad of limber joints and strong muscles. His father no longer worried when he went off on lonely explorations. But his father still did puzzle over what made the boy so independent of the society of his kind. All Johnny himself knew so far was a feeling deep inside that he must keep himself to himself and prepare for the future. A steel spring seemed to be

winding itself up within his breast. To himself, he said, "One day I shall be off and never look over my shoulder."

He found work in the village when he could. Times were hard. He was glad of a chance to tend the apple orchards, setting out young trees, grafting one kind of apple to another kind, to improve the stock. He was expert at pruning the trees. Men liked him for such jobs.

In the spring, he helped with the shad nets along the river. It was fun to haul in the long nets sagging and heavy with a thousand silver-shining fish. But that industry too began to be threatened by the greed of the landholders along the banks. They wanted to be paid a shilling for each fish because they held a paper for the land the fishermen trod upon. The same landholders they were who only paid the men who labored on their land, two shillings for a long day's work. And ordinary salt pork cost a shilling a pound. Times were hard.

Then came a springtime when Johnny was eighteen years old. He woke up one morning with the birds racketing in the woods and a song in his own heart. He stood naked by the cabin window and

stretched himself in the sun. His father was away. He felt himself king of the world. He looked down at his long legs and saw that they were strong for walking. When he bent his arms to get out the sleep, he was glad to hear the tough joints crack. His wide chest was thickening with a growth of hair, and his lean cheeks and long upper lip showed a fuzz. Somehow he felt he was nearing his life's adventure.

He was, but not as he expected. He swung home that night whistling to himself after a day at working the shad nets. He came to the cabin door and flung down two silver fish he had been carrying on a willow wand. He looked up and saw the preacher standing in the doorway. He stared at this solemn figure and something leapt from eye to eye and settled like cold frost around Johnny's heart.

"And my father?" he asked.

"Washed over the falls at Hadley," was the answer.

Johnny turned around blindly and walked into the woods. His only instinct was to escape and hide away till he could think.

When Johnny came out of his fog of grief, he found himself sitting at the edge of the woods on Pecousic Hill at the south

end of the village overlooking Mill River. The sun had set and the pale blue moonlight etched the scattered cabins in black and silver. Slowly the evening noises of the town, grew still except for the forlorn barking of a hound. One by one the little window lights winked out. Now only the whispering of the river rose and the mournful steady beat of the whippoorwill crying from the hillsides above the meadow. These night sounds fell on Johnny's ears and soothed his whirling thoughts. He looked down upon the cabins and thought with an aching throat of the long happy years of his boyhood and his father's companionship.

Now his father was gone. Suddenly. Forever. The Connecticut valley was filling with strangers from the east. There was nothing left to keep him in Springfield. Land speculators were fast selling off the immediate wilderness which he knew. The Indians were moving westward. The place was becoming civilized. Decent men were having their ears slit at the pillory next to the schoolhouse for debts which they could not control. Greed for land and lust for possessions filled men's thoughts. Even taxes were being raised by public lotteries. Time to be off.

"I am not fit for an age of commerce," Johnny told himself. "I'd best see what the ax-men are doing in the Alleghanies."

All night long, he paced the hill mastering his sorrow and when morning came, he started down to his father's cabin. He knew what he wanted.

This was middle May of 1793. Jonathan Chapman was eighteen years old. He set his jaw and entered the stillness of his father's house. His thick golden-brown hair shone in the sunlight. He held up his head and his deep-set eyes looked out beyond the arch of his nose at something far away.

He gazed long and deeply upon everything in their common room; at the ashes in the fireplace where the faint wind lifted them; at his father's tools hung in orderly fashion along the wall; at the tumbled blankets of his father's bed. He walked slowly around as in a dream and gently laid his hands on these familiar things. This was his father's flint and steel. He slipped it gently into the pocket of his shirt.

Then he dressed himself in stout hunting clothes as for a journey. He put on heavy moccasins and stuffed a handful of coppers and paper notes into his breeches. He

picked up his father's rifle and powder horn, and slung a pouch of victuals over his shoulder. He turned at last and filled the doorway, as he stood there. He was a man grown now, lean and sinewy.

As he stepped out of the door he noticed the clean-picked backbones of two fat shad he had dropped there the night before. Only the head and tails were left—mink from the river.

"That's what they'd do to me if I stayed," he thought sourly. "Pick me clean to the bone." "They" were a power he wished to leave behind him.

In the yard, he passed beneath the old apple tree where it threw a faint spring shade—the very tree he had fallen out of so very long ago. He paused and a sudden swirl of wind shook down the white petals in a quick shower upon his head. Some few blossoms clung to his shirt. Johnny started as if some one had spoken his name. He held out his lean fingers and let this fragrant snow fall upon his hands. He had the look of a man in deep prayer.

Up the main street of the village he walked and made straight for the square and the Court House. When he found the town clerk, he had trouble to get out what he

wanted to say. Finally he said: "Give my home to the neediest person."

The elderly clerk wanted to argue. "Really, Chapman," he said, "you shouldn't leave us this way. The town is just beginning to grow. It needs young men."

Words were useless. He could only choke out, "West," and wave his arm towards the hills.

So quickly he walked out of the Court House and down to Bridge Street, paid his threepence toll with a grim smile and took himself over the rattling boards of the wooden bridge to the new Westfield turnpike.

From the Court House door the clerk stared after the departing lad and absently picked up an apple blossom which he saw on the oaken floor, and smelled of it.

III

Hail and Farewell

THE slow tolling of the Court House bell drifted over the quiet waters of the river as Johnny paced hurriedly along the Agawam interval towards the hills. Six o'clock. The soft ringing echoed in his head —the death knell of his boyhood. He quickened his pace. The monotonous rhythm of hiking drugged his overwrought nerves. He was possessed with the simple idea of putting Springfield well behind him, forever. As he pushed along, he squinted at the vacant sky. It was going to be a scorcher.

Little spurts of dust shot out from his moccasins on the dry dirt road. He began to warm up as he mounted into the foothills above the valley. His joints loosened as he hit his stride.

Johnny stopped a moment and put a large burdock leaf inside the crown of his floppy felt hat. The bright pursuing sun was coming higher now over his shoulder. He walked by the side of the road in the shade

of the forest. The first uncertain trickle of salt sweat ran down into his eyebrows, down behind his ears and along his back. His coarse shirt plastered to his shoulders. His skin began to chafe from the straps of his pack. All in the routine. He knew that once he wore into the job, he could forget it. His gun was the only real nuisance. It spoiled the rhythm of his stride.

On and on he walked until he noticed his shadow shrinking under foot. He paused to ease his pack and looked up. The molten eye of the sun blinded him. He liked it. He always had favored the juicy limber-jointed days of summer. He was lean and tough and made for them.

Still when his cocked ear first caught the loudening sound of the Westfield river rushing over the falls at Warranoco, his pace quickened. What could fall sweeter on the ear of a sun-beaten traveller in hill country than the delicious swishing of mountain waters over mossy rocks. Below the rapids he turned down to the hemlock shaded banks, dropped his gun against a tree trunk, and unslung his pack with a deep sigh of content. Here was fifteen miles of westing.

Flopping down on the pine needles he pulled out a gourd of milk from his pack

and set it between two rocks at the edge of the stream to cool. He peeled off his sticky woolen socks and plunked his puffy feet into the cold current. Here was joy. Nothing in all the world like the medicine of cold water for the foot-weary traveller. He sat there and felt the easy pulsing blood shoot through his back and thighs.

For a moment, he had peace. Springfield and all the troubles of the valley world dropped away and left his mind as vacant as a noon meadow. He drew in his breath and let it softly out again, and drank in the balm of pure sensation, vaguely aware of the music of the falls, the slight whisper of air in the hemlocks overhead, the subdued chitter of birds seeking shelter in the undergrowth from the eye of the sun. He picked up his gourd of milk and slowly drank it and ate some of his victuals. He flung the empty gourd out upon the current and watched it bob crazily away towards the low-lands. "It will be a long time before I drink fresh milk again," he thought. And with that, the hours of yesterday flooded back upon him. For a moment the glimmering waters dazzled his eyes. He got up and shook himself and raised his pack. No more

peace until he earned it. He must get on —more distance, more distance.

Onward into the hills he pulled trying to out-pace that perpetual ache under his breastbone. For the most part, he had the road to himself in the heat of the day, sniffing up the dust as he scuffled down the hills and watching the dance of quicksilver heat waves shimmering on the edge of the next rise.

Once he met a peddler with a tinkling mule nimbing along under pack-saddles. The peddler wanted to talk, but Johnny passed with a nod and a grunt. He wanted to be left alone. He harbored vaguely the notion that he alone in all the wide state of Massachusetts was unwinding the Bay Path westwards. He wished to leave behind the world of men.

But the yellow eye of the sun slanting down impartially over many leagues of forest and meadow land saw here and there other little dots of humanity jog free from the grip of settlements and creep insect-like along the ribbons of road. Day after day the old sun pushed up behind these drifting dots and day after day passing beyond, he witnessed their increasing numbers. The tide of the white race was in flood sweep-

ing slowly westward through the forests of a continent.

As forenoon wore on Johnny pushed well into the hill country. The only settlement of any size he came upon was Westfield. There automatically he was swinging along to cross the bridge when the gatekeeper halted him and held out his hand for the penny toll.

Johnny came to life. "No sir," he said, eyeing the old man sharply. "Not a red cent." And he turned down behind the fur warehouses on the bank and waded across the ford. Why pay toll any more? He was off for the wilderness. Besides it felt good to him to brace his thighs against the steady push of mid-stream. On the west bank, he emptied his moccasins and went on.

His mind leaped ahead now. Deep in his breast a kind of cold fire seemed to burn. It wasn't exactly hope; it wasn't exactly courage. Something made him sure he would find what he was going after, though what it was he was going after he couldn't put into words. This feeling is common to all explorers, perhaps. It made whatever Johnny chose to do seem the most natural thing he could have done. It kept him steady.

Soon his road narrowed down almost to a bridle path and the river grew small and swift, leading him up through darkening ravines towards the bright ridges of the highest hills. As the afternoon drew on, shadows came sliding out from the hills. He began to cast about for a possible spot to camp down for the night. From the woody gloom of a narrow valley the hills opened up and there were no woods. A grassy meadow spread before his tired eyes dividing the stream into branches that went north and southwest. The banks of the stream were rank and blue with wild flag. Beyond the meadow stood a log cabin with out-buildings and a stockade to keep the cattle safe from wolves or bears.

Johnny thought he had never seen a homelier pleasant sight in all his days. He was dead beat. He realized now that he had come pushing along at too fast a clip for sensible travel. How often he had heard the old-timers in the village say "When you're in a hurry, go slow." He must remember. As he stood there wishful and irresolute at the edge of the water, he lifted his big nose and sniffed the air like a hungry hound. His mouth watered. Chimney smoke drifting from the cabin talked about

roasting meat. "Hello, there, in the house," he called.

A woman in an apron, with her brown hair slicked down, came out into the yard and looked him over. She seemed satisfied for she smiled and waved a wooden spoon at him. "All right, young man, come along with you." Then without waiting, she turned indoors. Slowly Johnny came up to the doorway and paused, taking off his hat. He saw a man and three children sitting by their plates at a trencher table watching the mother fry venison steak.

"Hot, ain't it," said the man. "Make yourself to home."

"Jest as lief," Johnny said; and he laid aside his pack and reaching up, perched his gun on the rack over the doorway. "It is uncommon hot."

Meanwhile the man walked over to a wall cupboard and tossed a towel to the boy. "You'll find a beaver dam a piece up-stream if you've got a notion to wash off a little."

"I'll be back in a shake," said Johnny, all smiles now at the thought of a swim. "Don't wait though."

"I'll give a call," the woman said, turning with a kindly look as the boy made off. Then to her husband: "We'd better take

him in for the night, Jake. He looks walked out." Jake nodded. 471444

Johnny came to the beaver dam. There was a flop and a ripple by a pile of cut poplar branches. Here too, they were making place for him. He hurriedly slipped out of his sticky clothes. The leaf-green waters of this quiet pool looked like heaven after twenty-five miles of hard foot-slogging. He stretched his aching legs and rubbed his ribs. The drift of evening air coming down the valley fell deliciously on his naked skin. He tried the water with a cautious toe. Cold! Holy mackerel! This was mountain water from the hidden glens where ice still clung beside the springs.

Gradually he let himself down into the pool gasping for breath. The cool edge of the water crept up in a line of quick-silver to his chin.

Johnny reached down and worked the knotted muscles of his legs with strong fingers until every kink and cramp was gone. At last he dragged himself out of the pool and with the swift edge of his hand sent a shower of spray to the grass. Then he laid on with the towel until his white skin grew pink and tender. The air felt like wine

now, and every muscle of his body tingled with new life.

Someone was tooting a cowhorn from the cabin and Johnny hurried back. He took his seat beside the others and the woman came rustling over from the stove with a sizzling skillet in one hand and a forked stick in the other. She slapped down a brown slab of venison on each plate. Johnny got out his clasp knife. "Eat up!" grinned the man, and without more words, the whole family set to with their hunger for a blessing. Except for the noise of busy feeding, there was silence. Presently the man brought over a jug of sweet cider and poured out pewter tankards. "Got jest enough of winter in her to set easy on the stommick," said he. Johnny felt all this too good to be true. Well enough he knew he couldn't expect many such lodgings as this. Lucky as things turned out he had that much sense.

The meal over, they pushed back their chairs and the mother got out her knitting. Johnny knew they'd have to ask him questions now. All settlers were terribly curious people. Their whole news of the world came from such stray guests as Johnny. Briefly he told them of his plans for a western jour-

HALF HORSE & HALF ALLIGATOR MEN.

ney. He couldn't tell much because he didn't know himself. After dinner comes a quiet time when hearty-eating folk like to rear back, loosen their belts and let the honest pleasure of digestion take its course. The family grouped around a whale-oil lamp which swung from the rafters. The steady click of the woman's needles was her contribution to the beginnings of talk. Sometimes when men get going, especially about themselves, and women sit back and knit and say nothing, you might think the women weren't getting any fun out of it, unless you read their eyes.

Johnny's host was a strange man, a little like an old owl. He sounded very wise in the small ways of life. The most of his wisdom was a sharp kind of caution. There was nothing out of the way about his looks except that his right ear was cropped off close to his head.

"Yes, sir," he was saying, "Yes sir, let me tell you plain I've had all the pioneering I hanker for. From now on, I choose to set pretty jest where I be, in civilized parts. You say west to me, do you?" he said squinting sharply at Johnny, "Well, son, I bin west. Clear beyond the Alleghanies. Now then, you listen to me."

"Jake, don't get started on that," the woman quietly broke in. "You know he won't. Think he'd be here on his lone if he'd listened to what the old men were saying?"

"Perhaps you're right, mother," said Jake with a shrug. "I guess he's too green maybe to have sense or get discouraged."

"If you don't mind my saying so," Johnny interrupted, "nothing you can say will turn me back. Go right ahead, please."

"Well, as I was about to say, I don't reckon even the fear of death 'ud hold you back."

"No, it wouldn't," Johnny nodded very solemn.

"Well, that ain't what I mean. That ain't what discourages. It's life," and here Jake looked very wise. "How would you like to have your nose bit off, or your ear for instance?" and he pointed to the side of his head.

"Bitten off?" Johnny was puzzled.

"Yes, sir. Bitten off and spat out and not by a red Injun either."

"Whew!" The boy was bound to be impressed. "And what kind of a critter did that, a catamount?"

"A alligator-horse two-legged critters

that inhabit the Ohio river and thereabouts. Tough men, I tell you. You'd do well to keep clear of that country if you want to stay your natural self."

"And what is an alligator-horse?" Johnny asked gently, for he knew the little man wanted to go on.

"It's a breed of ring-tailed howlers that runs flat boats down the river. They's tougher than bull leather."

"Well," said Johnny, "I figure to get along just as far west as my legs 'll get me, and I'll remember what you say. Do they talk English?"

"Hell's own," said Jake. He turned away towards the fire. He saw he wasn't throwing much of a scare into his guest. He was disappointed. "I might of know'd you was too young to listen," he mumbled.

"Now, Jake," the woman put down her needles and turned with a smile towards Johnny. "My old man is right," she said, "for him. And you do just right for you. I reckon if you mind your own business, other folks'll mind theirs, even alligator-horses."

Johnny's jaws began to quiver in a yawn that almost threw his face out of joint. He couldn't help it. Jake's wife got up. "You two had better turn in," she said, "particu-

larly if this young man wants to be off at sun-up."

Johnny was grateful. He rolled up on his bed of balsam boughs in a corner of the cabin and fell away into a dead slumber. Then almost at once, it seemed to him, he woke up and looked blindly about an unfamiliar room. The morning sun was slanting in and birds were chippering in the woods outside. He saw Jake's wife bending over the stove stuffing pine-knots into the fire box. He rubbed his heavy eyes. She looked up and smiled at him good-naturedly.

"You'd best jump into your shirt," she said. "It's sun-up."

To Johnny women were strange creatures. He had been brought up by his father so much in a man's world. Women bothered him. But this one was so kind his heart went out to her in gratitude. After breakfast when he took down his gun and slipped on his pack, she came over to where he was talking with the man Jake and gave him a packet. It was lunch for the day and an extra pair of socks.

"Take them for good luck," she said, touching his arm. "It will give me real pleasure."

Johnny was overcome. He blushed. He

didn't know what to say. So he shouldered his gun and waved them good-bye and made off across the river to the road. As he turned for one last look at the clearing, a white rooster sprang up on a chestnut stump and craned his neck to the skies, his red comb shining in the sun, and let out such a mighty whooping crow that the hills rang as if to a trumpet call. Johnny saw the woman wave one hand at the bird and then make a wide gesture waving him on up the trail. Something caught in his throat for a moment. He tossed his gun in reply and turned away into his second day's walking. Comforting that she at least wasn't worrying about those Alleghany man-eaters.

IV

The Dome

THE second day of his pilgrimage something clicked in Johnny, and his mind set itself on things ahead. He began to feel the horizon-pull all hikers get to know. Arms and hips swing along mile after mile in a sort of musical rhythm. The brain sems to go to sleep except for a constant recording of sensations which will flood back at journey's end.

The narrow road winding inchworm fashion up and down through forested highlands took Johnny over country that has not changed much in its loneliness even to this day. The same woodlands everywhere, only then it was virgin forest and to-day in second growth. Once he heard the clean ringing of axes in a grove of white oak and he paused for a breathing spell watching the bright blades flash in the sun. Now and then one of the trees would shiver, lean a little and then come crashing to earth while the

men shouted and stood away. They were getting out timber for the valley mills.

Passing through the high plateau country north of Tolland and Tyringham, Johnny met with occasional heavy drays loaded with raw wool and hides. One of the wains was piled with hogsheads of maple sugar. But the small settlements he came upon were few, and the farmsteads miles apart. It was a dreary land chopped up with a multitude of little ranges.

After a long hill called Jacob's Ladder, the country began to fall away again westward. He was drawing near the Housatonic valley now, and his pace quickened. Twice through openings in the forest he caught a far glimpse of mountains to the southwest. This was the Dome range marking the westernmost boundary of Massachusetts. He was anxious to reach the range by nightfall. Touching that, he would pass the first great milestone of his journey; after that—the Hudson.

He put the village of Great Barrington behind him without regret and came out upon the plain of Egermont. He was surprised to find the Housatonic such a gentle-flowing little stream. Held for a moment by the soft water noises, he let his hungry eyes

drink in the beauty of the wall of mountain that lay across his path. This was his first clear sight of the Dome. The psalm of David came to his lips: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help." The peace and brooding power of the range pushing its giant shoulders so majestically above the valley spoke to Johnny for the first time the real language of mountains. He was a valley-bred, forest-ranging lad. "Take it easy," the mountains said. "There is nothing to hurry after. Contain yourself and consider the centuries that pass. Nothing changes, contain yourself, take it easy."

"A sight for sore eyes," said a deep voice, starting Johnny out of his reverie. He saw a towheaded man seated under an elm at the side of the road. He must have been there all the time not wishing to break in on the boy. Johnny turned quickly and studied the man. He was heavy-set, broad in face and body, with gentle blue eyes.

"Sit down a spell," the man invited him, patting the grass. "Have a snack of grub." He passed Johnny some sausage and bread. "I run this farm by the river," he explained with a jerk of his head. "Where're you bound for?"

"The Ohio River," said Johnny.

"So? Well, well, well. That's a new name to me but I don't run about much. Could you see it from that mountain?"

"That one?" Johnny was amazed. "Lordy, no, it's a long ways west of the Hudson."

"So?" The man let his eye rove affectionately over the rich fields that stretched six miles between the river and the shadowy flank of the hills. "What do you think of this valley?"

"Looks like good farming," Johnny answered.

"'Deed it is, 'deed it is. Soil is rich, drains well, awful good grass. Timber's handy too. Everything handy here . . . everything a man could want. More people settling all the time . . . fine . . . fine."

"You're not curious about the other side of that mountain?" Johnny asked.

"No, not special. Only been over once and that was in winter when the cattle strayed. Cold . . . Goshen! that's the first place the wind hits this side the North Pole."

"I know," Johnny interrupted a little impatiently, "but I mean, don't you think it's interesting to go to a new place where a

man has to make his home for the very first time out of nothing, everything with his own hand and wits?"

"Why trouble, boy, when you got a valley like this? Stay where you can turn an easy furrow every time. That's sense. You must be witched to look for trouble."

"I'm not looking for trouble. I want independence, that's all."

The man looked Johnny up and down: "You're strong, aint you," he finally spoke; "now why don't you stay right here with me? I need an extra hand. Barrington is a grand town for young folks like you. Barn raisings with good rum and victuals, plenty of frolics when the work gets done in the fall, sleigh parties in winter, bundling with the girls. I don't work my help too hard. You give me a hand with the critters and the outside work, how 'bout it?"

Johnny heard him out, but already the deepening shadow in the folds of the mountain top caught his eye. His legs twitched to be off and up the dark slope. "I'm sorry, mister," he said, "but I've got to be getting on my way. Thank you and good-day to you."

"Well then, lad, remember my name in case you turn back. 'Tis Spoor. When you

get to the cliff along side the mountain, you'll see a corduroy road run up into the woods. That's Fiddler's Elbow and it'll take you over down to Kopaic. Good luck." The man stood there in the road as Johnny paced away. He stood and slowly shook his head and then turned back into his beloved fields.

As Johnny walked along with his head up his eyes drank in the peaceful mass of the mountain. There it grew before him raising its granite shoulders two thousand feet above the plain. It was quiet like a sleeping creature. Johnny thought he could almost see it breathe. Coming close under, he made out dark ravines folded in the eastern shadow of the slope and saw, through gaps in the trees, wavering veils of white where waterfalls spilled down the cliff. He came upon the trail Spoor had mentioned and followed it up and up along the mountain for about an hour. He took his time enjoying the cool under-water-green shade of the forest. Just before he got to the top, he crossed a little brook, the beginnings of one of the waterfalls. He rested his gun against a tree and bent down scooping up handfulls of sweet water to his hot face.

Gratefully rising to his feet again he suddenly noticed a chip of whittled wood floating by him. There must be a hut near by. He followed up the stream, thinking the cabin would be near the spring-hole. Presently he came out through the obstructing laurel plumb upon a hidden pond with its bright eye open to the sky only a few hundred yards below the rounded crest of the mountain.

As he stood gazing with delight he felt as if someone watched him. He turned slowly and saw not twenty yards away, an old man with a dirty white beard, standing in the doorway of a small hut. "What you want? What you want?" he asked in hollow uncertain tones.

"Why, nothing, sir, nothing at all," Johnny stammered. "I'm just passing by on my way."

"Come over here," the old man said without listening to the sense of the boy's words.

Johnny was fascinated. He came closer. After all, it was only an old man. He noticed what a bright cold eye looked out from the shaggy brows. All that was left of life in the old creature seemed to have centered in this hard unwinking stare.

"I'm going on ninety," he said, as if repeating a lesson. "But my appetite is good. I aint got nothing to worry about. My teeth is good. My bowels is regular. I'm quite hearty." He paused and gave a hollow catarrhal laugh that froze all the mirth out of Johnny.

"My name is Chapman," said Johnny politely, "and I'm on my way west."

"Yes, yes," the old man went right on, "I'm a hermit. I do for myself," he looked around hastily, "I do for myself. I'm remarkably spry for ninety." All this in a kind of thoughtful chant. Then suddenly he put his bony fingers on the boy's arm and his voice grew excited. He pushed his face close to Johnny and whispered: "It's because I'm God Almighty. I made this mountain. I made this forest. I made this hut with these two hands." His eyes grew very bright. "I made myself. I shall live forever." Then all at once, a sly look came over his face and he gripped Johnny's arm harder. "Perhaps you think I'm a liar."

"No, no, old man. I believe you. I really do. There's God in all of us. You will excuse me. I must be going." Johnny kept on talking and at the same time backing away until he reached the laurel. Then he

turned with a muttered good-by and hastened up the trail, glad to fall back into the protecting trees. He heaved a sigh and scratched his head. Certainly wilderness will play a man strange tricks.

He came out of the scrub oak onto the hot granite of the mountain top. Slowly he looked around the horizon, first to the south over the state of Connecticut above the twin lakes and beyond where the hills dwindled down towards the sea; then past Alander mountain he turned his eyes westward. Miles of rolling forest land spread away before his feet in a choppy sea of hill country. As he searched further, gradually out of the horizon mists a faint blue curtain of mountains became visible. These must be the Catskills west of the Hudson. Shading his eyes for a moment, he thought he caught the silver glint of the great river itself. He could not be quite sure. Forty miles was a long sighting with the sun sinking toward the horizon.

Now close at hand below Alander, he noticed the heavy smoke of furnaces with touches of flame shooting up from the shadow of the valley. That was Kopaic. That was the famous ironworks where

cannon ball for Washington's army had been made.

As he started down the western slope of the Dome, Johnny found himself walking slower and slower. After a few hundred yards he came to a clear swift-running stream, the outlet of a mountain pond he could not have seen. He stopped to look about him. Should he go down to Kopaic or hunt for a camping place where he was? He glanced at the sky. Certainly no chance of rain and the air was warm. Why not? He dropped his gun on the grass by the brookside and wandered up and down the banks looking for a dry and sheltered spot.

He found what he wanted at the edge of a meadow a little below the top of the mountain. A thick growth of blueberry bushes made an easy mattress, and it was far enough from the brook to escape the drift of morning mist.

Down by the stream he cooked himself a supper of sow-belly, and fried crusts of bread dipped in fat by holding them on a forked stick over the flame. As night fell he went back to the edge of the blueberry patch and made a rough shelter of brush around his sleeping place. No stray animals could bother his sleep without first

awakening him. There was nothing to be afraid of, but there might be an occasional wolf or bob-cat in these hills and he wanted a free mind for sleep.

He stretched out on his back gazing up into the starry heavens. He could make out Cassiopeia's Chair and Draco with his glaring eyes. Many bright pairs of eyes stared down into his dreamy own. The whippoorwills beat out the rhythm of darkness all along the mountain. Now and then a little mouse running under the grasses would squeak. Far away in the valley he heard the thin shrill bark of a fox. Then he fell asleep. He awoke just before sun-up, his face wet with dew. He was a little bit stiff and chilly, so he got up and jumped around to get his blood running.

Gradually the dim crest of the mountain took on a sharper edge against the east. A few birds chirped in the forest. A noisy jay fluttered around him in erratic blue flashes and commenced to scream. Johnny went down and washed his face in the brook and then climbed up to the mountain top just above him to watch for the sun. In a moment, a dull red eyebrow peered over the eastern rim of the valley. Then the orange ball of the sun rose up turning

slowly as it cleared from mist into the yellow glaring eye he knew so well.

Something made Johnny turn and look back along yesterday's trail. There was the little pond and beside it the hermit's shack. Out from the cabin leaning on the arm of a woman whom Johnny took to be an Indian squaw, the old man emerged and went to the water's edge. Then like some strange mountain spirit, he knelt down and faced the sun making gestures from the sun into his bare and bony breast. The squaw stood by, watching. In a moment the old hermit was back in his cabin, and Johnny, standing there alone in the world, wondered if what he had just seen was real or his own fancy.

Johnny went down the mountain full of notions. So, after all, there was someone to tend the fires of life that glittered from the hermit's pagan eye? He could not bring himself to laugh. There was a spark of something in the old fool, and he was bound to respect the mystery of life however it showed itself in other people. He picked up his gun and pack and headed down towards Kopaic for some breakfast. But all that day his mind was busy with the dweller on the Dome.

V

Chin Plaster

A LEAN man all sinew and silence stood in the lee of the shed roof at the ferry slip opposite Kingston, and stared intently across the gray expanse of the Hudson River. The easterly slant of rain beat in upon him and a parade of drops raced around his hat brim and fell methodically from the point of his hooked nose. His weather-burnt skin set off a pair of crackling blue eyes.

Presently he made out the blurred form of the ferryboat sliding over the dull metallic waters. Satisfied, he turned away stamping the rain from his clothes and looked up the ribbon of road which came down from the back country where he saw the pin-size figure of a man, a mile distant, pacing down towards the landing. Apparently he judged the ferry would get in well ahead of the walker and so turned his eyes again to the river. The opposite shore was scarcely visible. Now and then fresh gusts of rain

shut off sight of the approaching boat as it steered an erratic course. "Drunk again, the fool," he muttered impatiently under his breath.

The barge was rigged with a small sail and a pair of sweeps. Somehow the ferryman managed to bring her in broadside onto the wharf. He grabbed a piling and looked up to the shed yelling for help. "I hear ye and I won't," was the reply with a trace of a smile.

The man on shore took a grim pleasure in the ferryman's curses as he stumbled over the side waist-deep in water and pulled the boat around making it fast. He barely grunted when the angry boatman squidged up to the hut and growled, "So it's you, Nat. Nice accommodating feller. I hope to hell you're dry and happy."

Nat followed the other into the hut. "I been waiting," he said, "and don't you go get any more lickered up or we'll never get back across."

"Back?" The ferryman put down his bottle and glowered, "Now aint that like you. No heart . . . just want to keep me working in bloody weather like this." He took another drink and smacked his thick lips. Then he went over to the door and

looked up the road. "Blast me if here aint another. Just my luck."

The two men under the shed watched the oncoming walker. He was close now pacing along with easy bending knees, looking straight before him. "A young feller," said Nat, "and he's come a good way."

A dog yapped in the near-by woods. "He's hunting, maybe. That's his dog." The ferryman hoped for the best.

"No, it aint," said Nat. "That man's got one idea and it's this ferry and that river. He aint no huntsman. He's got the breech of his gun wrapped up. Just another of these wilderness hounds going somewhere."

"Then why's the dog yapping? Answer me that."

"Same reason you drink. Got to, I guess."

The walker came swinging in under the shed, wet and steaming. He nodded to the men and unwrapped an old shirt from his gun and stood it in a dry corner. Then he looked up and smiled pleasantly. "When do we go, mister?" he asked.

Nat grinned and the ferryman looked the boy up and down with bold drink-fogged eyes. "And who the devil are you to order me around?"

Johnny didn't budge a hair. "My name's

Chapman. This is the Hudson, isn't it? I want to get over." He had met hard men before. He turned away and ran down to the river and scooped up a handful of water to his thirsty lips. He spat it out with disgust. There was laughter from the shed. "Kinda brackish, boy, kinda brackish," called Nat, and the ferryman shook his head: "Nat, he's too young to be out alone. Drinks tidewater and don't know the Hudson. Aint dry behind the ears yet."

Johnny pretended not to hear and blew his nose on the grass with a deft thumb and finger.

The ferryman reached for his bottle. "Nat," he said, "I'll take you over in another ten minutes. You better look after this boy."

Johnny leaning against the shed, stared at the river. Nat studied quietly the rugged raw-boned lad whose muscles stood out where the wet clothes stuck to his limbs. He fancied the boy's looks. The two of them were not unlike. Johnny was apparently lost in speculation drinking in the shifting rain-washed panorama of the broad sheet of water with the dim hills beyond. This was what he had been aiming for. All the hard pushing of the last few days was

at his back wanting to get him over, and here was a half-soused ferryman making him wait. A slow resentment burned in him.

Then suddenly Nat grabbed his arm and turning away they saw a doe race across the field to the river bank, closely followed by a hound. She jumped into the water and swam hard for midstream, her head laid back, her quivering muzzle cutting the water. The ferryman, roused by the dog, stumbled out and snatching Johnny's gun, primed the flintlock and took aim. But before he could fire, the boy had leaped on the marksman and knocked up the barrel. The shot went wild. "What give you that notion, you dirty little cuss," yelled the ferryman and crowded up close to the boy. "Who be you to come between me and fair game?"

Johnny was mad clean through. "You had no right. She'd have gone down if you'd hit her. You had no right."

"What's that to you?" The ferryman doubled his fists and backed Johnny off the porch into the rain.

A quiet voice from behind and the musket was deftly taken from the boy's hand. "Watch out. He's a dirty fighter."

Then the drunk rushed and Johnny, unencumbered, stepped quickly to one side and swung his fist, a tough fist as rocky as a hickory knot, and caught the clumsy ferryman on the button of his chin. Down he went face-first, quivered a moment, gave a sigh and was still.

Johnny stared at him and turned pale. He felt sick. There was a long moment when he heard the dreary patter of rain in the trees and the sighing wind. He didn't know what to do. Then the stranger was at his side. "Nicely done and don't you worry. You couldn't hurt that customer with an axe." He stooped and turned the man over on his back. His eyelids were fluttering.

"Shall I fetch some water?"

"Water? Leave him lie. Let him sleep while we make our get-away." Nat handed Johnny his gun. "Here's your iron, lad. Come on."

Something rose up in Johnny. He took the musket by the barrel and flung it with all his strength and saw it go circling slowly out and down under the gray waters of the Hudson.

"Well, tan my hide," said Nat, "if you aint just too clever for me." Then he

pulled Johnny into the boat and cast off from the wharf. "Take your oar and lay to her," he shouted. They were clearing from the shore when Johnny heard the man whisper between breaths, "Pull hard, lad. If he comes to, he'll get his own iron and try to drill us."

Nat was right. They had hardly pulled five hundred yards when they saw the ferryman scramble to his feet and going to his shanty, pick up his own gun.

ZING . . . a ball came skipping over the water close to the boat. "Lucky he's cock-eyed from licker and knuckles," laughed Nat. He enjoyed the adventure.

They were out of danger. They set the dirty patch of sail and disappeared into the gathering mist towards the Kingston slip.

The passengers waiting for the barge on the western bank shouted: "What's up? Where's the ferryman? Is the fool too drunk to work?"

"Yes and no, brother," grinned Nat as he made the boat fast. "More sore than drunk just now. If I was you folks, I'd wait a little bit before I went over to him. Let him sleep."

Johnny slowly pulled out a soggy wad of what was left of his Massachusetts paper

money and handed it to one of the men. "He suffers from jaw trouble in particular," he drawled. "If you just as lief give him these for his pains. Tell him to chew 'em up good and mix with a little bile and apply as chin-plaster. He'll get you."

Then Johnny and his new acquaintance passed on up the cobbled street looking out for the sign of the tavern called the Black Bear where Nat said he had a pack with change of clothes enough for them both. The older man was noticing how chilly Johnny looked, and blue around the lips.

Suddenly the boy halted in the street and turned a blank dripping face upon Nat. "I can't go there. I haven't a red cent to pay my way with."

He got a gruff answer. "Forget it. I got plenty. Give and take, that's frontier law. Step along lively and see if you can find that sign." Half way up the cobbled street, they came upon the tavern, its warm windows glowing with welcome into the dusk and rain. Johnny shrugged off his doubts. Why not?

They entered the building and stumped up a flight of noisy wooden stairs into a dimly lit low-ceilinged common room with benches and plank tables. A handful of

men, peddlers, wagoners and such around the roaring fireplace, made room for the newcomers. The landlord came over. "Dirty weather," he said. "What'll it be?"

"Two schnapps and hot water," replied Nat.

"Cider for me, please, mister," said Johnny.

"Nothing, nothing," Nat broke in, "two schnapps, landlord, and make 'em stiff." Then to the boy. "Cider's all right for ordinary sailing, but we need a dash of medicine. I mostly don't touch this red-eye stuff myself, but to-night we got to warm up and come to life, lad."

Johnny was glad enough to have somebody boss him. He squatted down in the corner of the fireplace and let the water steam out of his clothes. The waves of heat beating from the hot bricks made him drowsy and contented. Nat meanwhile found his knapsack and threw a change of clothes to Johnny. Both of them dressed in front of the hearth. This room was their sleeping quarters as well as everything else. The separate rooms were always reserved for the high-toned stagecoach folk—the rich and pursy merchants from Albany and New York and others who could pay.

Once Johnny had tucked away a generous plate of ham and eggs and gulped his deep mug of choking schnapps, his world came to rights again. He began to sit up and take notice. The swish and perpetual patter of the storm outside only added to his present sense of security. One of the peddlers, a Pennsylvania Dutchman from Philadelphia, attached himself to the two men. He came and sat down while Nat was questioning Johnny.

"Before I forget it, why in notion did you throw away that gun this afternoon? You got me stumped."

"I don't know," Johnny replied. "I really don't know. It just came on me. I had to. Makes me mad to see people go and kill for the fun of it. Firearms is too strong for a slack-twisted critter like that ferryman."

"Yeah . . . maybe," said Nat. "But it's your *gun*. You ain't weak."

"Well, no matter. I felt that way," Johnny frowned. "I guess I can get on without it. I'd rather."

"It was your gun," said Nat, "and it's your notion. I only hope the Lord will look after the simple-hearted even in the wilderness. How far west you plan to go?"

"The Ohio."

"Fair enough, lad, fair enough. You better come up the Mohawk to Otsego with me and I'll start you down from there."

Here the peddler could contain himself no longer. "You gen'l'men excuse me, please. Which way you going to the Ohio? I been out that way frequent. I can tell you all about everything out that way."

Nat inspected the man with a distant eye. "You don't look it," he said.

"Maybe not, mister, but you must excuse me. I been out from Philadelphy, out the Conestoga road past Lancaster clean to Sunbury on the Susquehanna. What you know about that?"

"Marvelous," said Nat, and spat into the fireplace. "Ride or walk?"

"Little of both," said the man, turning his full attention upon Johnny. "I always walk when I have to and ride in the wagons with the boys when I can. That's the way to go. When you get to Sunbury, take the Raystown road straight over the mountains to Pittsburg. That's the Ohio. People going every day. I know it. I sell my stuff out that way. Excuse me, gen'l'men, let me show you my goods."

The peddler hauled out a raw-hide box from the corner studded with shiny brass

nails. He set it in his lap and opened the lid with a gesture of discovery. Inside were rows of little bottles and square tin boxes all labeled in red and green inks. As he handled these things, he became more self-assured.

"Now, gen'l'men, attention. I show you only the finest essences straight from the wildwood, picked by real genuine Indian medicine men, all warranted, all guaranteed. Absolute medicines, gen'l'men. Listen now, see this?" He held up the first of many boxes reverently as if it were the only thing of its kind.

"This is pure opodeldoc, will penetrate the toughest chest and cure the roughest cold. Next I have essence of peppermint and the wild wintergreen. Here is bergamot, fragrant as the breath of Venus, clove aniseed, and wormwood bitters to put in your licker and improve your blood. Here is basil, sweet basil for the breath and flagroot warranted to purify your sour stommick. Did you ever feel like broken glass was in your muscles after a rain? This Seneca Indian oil will cure you. Never saw a red Indian with rumatiz. And skunk oil for sore muscles. I got that, and ginseng from the Sideling Hills; and calamus."

Here he paused a moment for breath and fished out from the bottom of the box something wrapped in doeskin. He unfolded this little object delicately and displayed in the fat palm of his hand a small sky-blue stone. He touched it with a forefinger. "Look at it," he invited Johnny.

"Why," said Johnny, "it looks to me just like a piece of blue slag from the ironworks at Kopaic."

The peddler's feelings were hurt. He held up a heavy hand and gazed at Johnny with astonishment. "Don't say so. Don't say so, young man. Somebody might hear your ignorance. This," and he held the piece between his plump fingers under the lamp where the azure blue shone to advantage, "this is the famous Bezoar Stone. Sure cure for snake bites. If you wa'nt so doubting, I might let you have it for a few shillings. You'll need it bad in the mountains with all them snakes shaking their tails across your path. Yes, sir, an exceptional specimen of the Bezoar Stone."

"Bezoar, my foot," Nat broke in. "I stand with the boy. It's an uncommon fine sample of slag. Let me tell you, mister peddler, you stick to essences and the womenfolk. If the lad gets stung by a

serpent, he can cut it and burn it or suck it and spit it out; and then if there is any black ashe handy, chew up a handful of the leaves and slap it on. Bezoar Stone!" Nat got up and yawned. "Good-night, Mister, and obliged to you and now we're going to take a flop till morning."

The landlord brought around old bed tickings filled with corn husks and tossed one to each man. "Pick a nice soft board," he winked at Johnny. "It's all pine and no knots."

Johnny rolled up and closed his eyes. This was something like. His ankle itched. He scratched it. The itch went on up his leg. His shoulder itched. The itch started down his back. He scratched it. Then he gave a sigh and quit. "Let 'em graze," he thought, and then he fell away in righteous slumber.

Nat left a call for daybreak and asked the landlord to warn them if the ferryman showed up.

VI

Up River

LYING stretched out in heavy slumber on his pine bench in the tavern at Kingston, Johnny awoke filled with a strange sense of elation. His bones ached a little from the boards, but that would pass. As he lay and yawned, some dream just out of reach of his mind excited his imagination. He was in one of those spells which came upon him from time to time and made him feel reborn and on the verge of a great discovery.

As he became more wide awake, he heard the quiet rippling noise of the great river lapping at the cobbled beaches of the town. The very sound of that wide stretch of water seemed to shut off forever his New England life. He was amazed that only one week had gone by in actual counted time since he had left Springfield. It felt like years of growth to him.

"Come on with you, lad. You're the last one up. Stir your stumps." The words

yanked Johnny out of his day-dreaming. It was Nat. He pulled Johnny off the bench and pointed to the window. "It's stopped raining. I'll be down in the yard fixing up."

The boy wobbled sleepily over to the open casement and stood there rubbing his eyes and scratching himself. He could look right downhill over the house tops to the river. He noticed the dew was rapidly drying from the slate roofs except where the odd-shaped chimney pots slanted down. A fresh wind drawing up the Hudson River carried with it a multitude of morning noises; pigeons under the eaves, street cries of the milkmen and the baker's boy, and the gentle gruff voices of the grooms in the stable yard talking to the horses in the unfamiliar accent of the local Dutch.

He looked for his clothes and was glad to find they were dry again. As he dressed, he had to laugh at himself. Here he had struggled more than a hundred miles over the lonely forest road from Connecticut, and look at him, at ease in a comfortable tavern in the midst of a bustling civilization more thriving than that of the homeland he had left behind. He longed to be under weigh towards the hardship of the

wilderness. He was sure now that he would go along north with Nat and not take the short cut by way of Philadelphia. His dream, whatever it was, had settled that much for him.

When he went downstairs for breakfast, he found Nat in the yard sitting on a bench cleaning his rifle and whetting his long knife and delicately balanced tomahawk. Johnny watched his friend expertly pack sausages, cheese and unleavened bread into a doeskin bag to stow in his pack. He felt ashamed for his own flat knapsack wadded up with an extra shirt and a few socks. He sighed. If he had only kept his gun he could have sold it.

Nat watching from the corner of his quiet eyes spoke up: "You make this trip on me. It's only about four days up to the lake." He showed Johnny a crumpled mass of Continental notes and grinned. "We can scatter this stuff while it's still some use. After I send you off from Otsego down into the wilderness, your arm and your wit will pay your way. No sense in worrying, lad. All the same in a hundred years."

"So you think I'm going north up the

Mohawk?" the boy smiled down at Nat. The huntsman gave a sharp look.

"Never doubted. Who'd want to go by Philadelphy and see a lot more Dutchmen like that peddler only worse? You come my way to Sunbury. The Iroquois country'll just tighten you up enough so you'll be ready for the mountains."

Johnny accepted Nat's offer gladly. No man can tell when his own time will come to hand out food to the starving or pull in his own belt and look for a friend. Some day he hoped to be able to help just such another as himself.

The sun had rolled well up into the blue sky from the watery acres of the Atlantic. The prime of morning had long since gone sweeping by towards the Ohio over the dark miles of mountain forest. A current of life moved and stirred all along the Hudson Valley. It seemed half the world was on foot pushing out to new places. A procession of teams and wagons gradually formed on the river turnpike headed for Albany, thence to trickle out up the Mohawk and other rivers until the wide wilderness soaked up these drops of frontier blood like a hungry sponge.

Every kind of moving thing started at

the signal of the sun. Johnny and Nat were only two more drops of eager blood nourishing this slow-bodied beast of pioneer traffic. They swung down the cobbled rain-washed street of Kingston and plodded along in the fresh morning light northward over the low hills by the edge of the river cliffs. They passed the laboring ox-teams piled with bales from the wharves of New York; ironware and casks of black molasses and foreign dress stuffs for the Albany shops and Indian trade.

Once towards noon around a bend in the road, they heard the oncoming horn of the mail express and stepped quickly aside into the tall grass while the rocking coach and the four steaming horses rattled by through the splattering puddles. Johnny's heart lifted in admiration for the swagger and assurance of the tan-faced driver snapping his bull whip along the flanks of the lead horses. For some time they could catch the echo of the sweet-sounding horn along the river cliffs.

Then as Johnny dreamed along, the road sliding by monotonously under his feet, Nat suddenly grabbed his arm, pointing down to the river by Catskill Landing. The two walkers came to a standstill and stared at a

West Indian brigantine landlocked among these inland hills. That mythical bird the roc, with its white wings upraised settling for the first time upon the waters of creation could not have startled them more. Every sail was set to catch the faint air currents. Only the trace of gentle waves etched from her blunt bows told of any motion as she lay there fettered by the hills, far from the open sea working her way heavy-laden towards the port of Albany.

Johnny could just make out men creeping like insects in the rigging ready to set sail for every shift of air. A wavering rhythm of sea-chantey drifted up to the cliff road from men swaying upon the deck as they hauled at the mainsail braces. Here was something brand-new to Johnny. He had never been within sight of the sea in his life. He wondered how he might like to face about and cast off straight upon the desert of the ocean instead of plunging westward along narrow trails to master the granite billows of the Alleghanies.

But he knew he was a woodsman and what his destiny was. Losing sight of the vessel beyond a hill, he found his touch with the strange adventurer had somehow

affected his thoughts. He wished he knew the tally of his own cargo and what far port was written on his papers. The feeling took hold of him that he must very soon chart his course and find out just what he was good for in the new life he had mapped out for himself.

VII

The Mohawk Trail

BUT one thing Johnny was sure of and that was he didn't like the world of shopkeepers, Dutch shopkeepers especially. On the second day of travel Nat led him into the town of Albany. From quite far off they spotted the town by the shining roofs of native tin. As they came nearer, the streets narrowed down and the tall gabled houses crowded up so close that Johnny felt as if he needed elbowroom. Everywhere deep mud was underfoot because the long tin gutters dumped all the roof water into the middle of the streets.

The houses themselves were not much to look at. Only the street side was made of brick and the rest which didn't show was left bare boards. As they glanced through the few open doors as they passed, they saw that the interiors of the houses, in great contrast to the outside, were kept in very fine condition and showed signs of considerable wealth. Johnny understood the town

was a machine for screwing fortunes out of the wilderness. Indian traders passed them everywhere on the streets, and the shop windows were full of expensive stuffs for the burghers; and for trading to the red men in exchange for beaver, cheaper stuffs such as wampum and glass beads and bright cotton goods, red bunts and blue sagatha cloth and handkerchiefs which went by the names of culgees and bandanoes.

Near the center of the town they asked for a drink of water at one of the houses. It was given most grudgingly. Moreover the Albany drinking water was flat and muddy. That was the last straw for Nat. "Let's get out of here. This is the dirtiest, most onery close-fisted burgh in all the states," he told Johnny and the boy was ready to believe him. He hated the whole atmosphere of these close-trading, self-sufficient shop-dwellers.

Leaving by the north end of the town they struck off into the pine forest where a road cut across-country to the Mohawk, avoiding the falls at Cohoes. Gradually, as the two men strode along the pine needle floor of the forest, Johnny was overcome with a strange feeling. The still world of midday summer became unreal—just the

steady flip-flop of their moccasins on the path underfoot, and no other sound. Nat uttered no word but the boy noticed that he kept up a swift pace for so hot a day. It seemed hours on end that he watched Nat's sweaty back, the steady panther-like drive of his legs, his swinging hips.

At last in a clearing round a windfall, where the great white pines lay tumbled and tossed about as if a huge hand had carelessly come down, Nat stopped, unloosened his pack and gave a grunt of relief. Of one accord both man and boy looked long and curiously at the sky. There was nothing to be seen, yet the sun seemed to be fading out too early in the day. The woods were very still of birds, a tree toad somewhere near a brook rattled harshly, but not a single thrush sang anywhere. Johnny wondered why they didn't keep on to the river. His one idea of a place to camp was beside the bank of a river. He liked nothing better than to drop to sleep and wake up to the gentle lulling noise of water and rock talking together in the quiet of a forest. "It isn't so far from here to the Mohawk, is it?"

Nat smiled to himself. "Not so very, but here's where we flop, my boy." Nat busied

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himself prizing around in the tumbled windbreak. "You go over to that little stream," he told Johnny, "and fix up a fire on the damp ground among them rocks. Got your flint and tinder?"

"All right." The boy was glad to do something, and tickled to have the older man trust his woodcraft.

Nat poked here and there climbing among the tumbled trunks of the virgin forest piled like jackstraws over the rocky slope beside the brook. Finally he found what he was looking for in a low granite ledge that jutted out making a sort of half-cave against the hill. He picked up a long stick and jambed around under the over-hanging rock among the leaves and debris to make sure no snakes or vermin lived there.

All this while a smoky sort of dusk had filtered through the forest like an evil dream. The tall black pines stood sharp against the copper-colored western sky. Nat turned and saw the bright flame and the wavering smoke of Johnny's fire grow-ing like a red flower at the dark edge of the wood. He flung over his knapsack. "Better cook-up and don't you believe you hadn't," he called, pointing to the sky.

Johnny needed no urging. He already sensed uneasily the impending storm. He snaked out the grub from the pack, pricked little holes in the sausages with his knife, and set them on forked green sticks over the coals to roast. His lean jaws soured with hunger as he sniffed the delicious smoke of the burning fat. And yet he caught himself wondering all this while why he did not hear the usual grumblings of thunder from the making shower. There was no sound save the silver talking of the little stream and the crackle of the twigs on the fire.

Looking where Nat was at work, Johnny saw him take out his tomahawk and cut birch sapling from the edge of the clearing. With a flat rock for a hammer he drove and wedged these in a sort of fence almost entirely across the front of the ledge. He pried up large rocks and laid them against the bottom of this improvised wall and cut armfulls of flat balsam and wove them into the saplings to make a weather-proof shelter. The fragrant tips of the balsam Nat flung inside the cave.

Johnny lifted the sausage from the coals and went over and stood by his friend.

"You're not going to trouble to make a regular bough bed?" he asked Nat.

"Why in tarnation should I, boy? Can't you see the drainage is all wrong?"

"But I thought you thought it was going to rain and . . ."

"You thought I thought. . . ." Nat laughed and slapped Johnny on the shoulder. "Lad, I'm making a hole to hide in. It aint going to rain. It's going to deluge. Come on, let's eat."

They picked up the sizzling sausage sticks, took out their bread and cheese and ate. The unnatural, coppery dusk stealing suddenly down the hillsides put haste into their fingers. Johnny gulped his food nervously. "Ever seen a twister?" Nat asked with his mouth full.

"Twister?"

"Yep. What lays out a place just like you and me are fixing to camp in over there."

"No," said Johnny and his eyes began to open. "You think maybe we're in for one?"

"Well, after a fashion. Wouldn't surprise me to see plenty of weather loose pretty quick." He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. "It's real witchy, aint it?"

"Hear that!" Johnny spoke this time.

The thunder had commenced. A long continuous roll of noise. They waited for it to stop but there was scarcely a pause between concussions. The noise came on over the distant, wooded hills with a muffled rumbling louder and slowly nearer, as if a giant wagon were moving on over a plank bridge, surely and heavily, moment by moment, louder and nearer. Scud came chasing out of the copper gloom sailing close over the tree tops which now for the first time bent crazily before a freshening wind, an uncertain wind blowing erratically from all the western quarters of the compass.

Nat pushed Johnny's arm in the dark. "Better crawl into our hole now. I don't like woods in this weather."

They could just make out the cave entrance in the black night now upon them. "Get in with you," yelled Nat above the roaring sea-noise of the wind. The storm was coming now from the south, blowing a gale. Lightning beyond the hills flickered like a bright fan through the crazy tossing forest, and the thunder with a giant's tread came marching on. The two fugitives pushed their packs back against the rock of the cave floor and curled up as best they could. Johnny shivered with excitement.

Now the heart of the storm broke above them and lightning like a basket of swords in one sweep fell upon the clearing from behind the hill. The forest roared like a tormented sea and a hissing wall of rain slanted down shutting off the world at the cave door. The water pouring along the ledge made a brook in which they crouched. Johnny jumped when a terrific crash and the splitting of a struck pine seemed to come from directly above their heads. Even Nat ducked. They grinned at each other as the lightning flashed, and the older man put his face close to Johnny's ear. "Quite a shower," he yelled. "Scart?" Johnny shook his head and licked the warm rain water from his lips. The spray of the storm drove in clean through the wall of balsam.

Gradually the turmoil of the storm passed on over where the two sat hidden in their cave. The peace and stillness of night took back the world. Johnny and Nat crawled stiffly out through the tumbled rubbish, stretched themselves and looked about. At their feet the little brook, swollen to twice its ordinary width, made a frothy racket. A steady dripping from the forest trees was the only other sound. Overhead a few moist stars floated new-washed in the branchy

harbors of the sky. A wrack of storm cloud slid softly and swiftly eastward. It was very dark.

"Might as well go sit it out till break of day," Nat finally suggested in a quiet voice. They propped their sodden packs against the cold wet rock, and hunched up, head against knees, to wait it out. It was a good deal cooler now and Johnny shivered and his lips grew dry, his courage gone. Nat snored. Johnny felt lonely and wondered why he had ever set out on this crazy venture. Presently the trunks of the trees across the clearing began to take dim shape in the blackness and a bird chirped.

Johnny crawled once more free from the cramped shelter of the ledge and gently stretched his aching bones. His teeth chattered as he stood up and looked about him. The slow light of dawn leaked through the woods. All about he saw signs of heavy-handed destruction as if the Stonish Giants of Iroquois legend had actually passed that way striding down from the Adirondacks across the brittle woodlands.

Johnny left Nat fussing with the packs and hobbled over to the place where he had built his fire the night before. He tried to pound the cramp out of his thighs with his

blue and goosey fist. On all sides the tall grasses of the clearing lay flat. The drowned and draggled body of a gray squirrel lay like an old mitten beside the washed-out fireplace. As he stood there irresolutely, the sun slid up beyond the tree trunks and shot fire through the dripping woods. Far up the glen the broken scales of the hermit thrush's song sent a thrill leaping in Johnny's breast. Day at last, and for the moment all the night's destruction and loneliness seemed a cloudy dream.

His enjoyment was soon over. Chills and fever shook his frame. He turned a dismal face toward Nat. The hunter had been watching him with a critical eye. "I know what's the matter, Johnny," he said. "You got a touch of ague. What they call the 'swamp shakes' over beyond the mountains."

Johnny tried to smile. "What shall I do now, Nat?" he asked between rattling teeth.

"Get down to the river and spruce up," Nat replied. "It's not far, you can hear it roaring if you listen. I'll build you a fire when I get your blood a-moving and once you get steamed out good, you'll feel spry as a chipmunk."

Johnny didn't believe him but he picked

up his sodden pack and set out stiffly after his friend. They had to pick their way along the trail over heaps of fallen branches, and the boy needed to set his whole will on keeping pace, forcing one uncertain foot before the other. His Adam's apple was a dry stone caught in his gullet, and his tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth. When he looked up, little dark blue spots danced before his eyes. Just to keep on going and not make trouble for Nat. Just keep on a-going, was all that came into his mind.

By and by the slow blood came mounting back into his young legs and he felt stronger. He lifted his head and for the first time smelt the spicy earth odor of the delicate grasses and the forest floor always so rich after an electric storm. He even began to feel a little hungry. "I guess I'm out of danger now," he thought to himself.

They came to a meadow, beyond which lay the up-river road. The white canvas-topped van of a settler caught their gaze and the curling plume of his fire-smoke at the edge of the wood. Nat winked very solemnly at the boy.

"We'll just drop in for a cup of tea, my lad. Feel better now?"

"Yes, pretty good."

"Well, you won't be right till I fix you. I don't aim to drag any half-drowned puppy into Otsego with me." He smiled and reached over and poked Johnny in the ribs. "Come on, lad."

As they drew close to the wagon the two walkers saw a woman sitting on one of the wagon shafts suckling a baby. She was a large fair-haired young woman with wide blue eyes. She nodded shyly at the men and pointing towards the river spoke in a foreign tongue and shrugged her shoulders not expecting an answer. Much to Johnny's surprise, he heard Nat reply in the same lingo. The woman laughed with pleasure. She put the child upon her large spread knees and gave a hail towards the river. A man's voice answered and she took up her baby to breast again and bent over laughing and talking to it. A man came in sight carrying two buckets of water. He nodded and hung the buckets on a green pole over the fire. "Vee iss Dutch peeples," he said, not knowing that Nat could talk low German. "Bim'by vee eat."

When Nat and the German couple had talked for a while, Nat turned to his friend. "They're headed for Herkimer and then on

over the Deerfield hills to Baron Steuben's. Folks like these are making a big settlement up there at the head-waters. Nice people. They say we can have one of the buckets of hot water."

The woman handed her baby to the husband and went over to the wagon. She brought a towel and a sponge to Johnny and smiled warmly. She made him feel shy, like a little boy again. Nat gingerly unhooking a steamy bucket from the fire, beckoned to Johnny to follow him. They dropped down behind some alders to the side of the rushing Mohawk.

"Strip," commanded Nat. And he took the sponge full of stinging hot water and soused and groomed the lad's body as he would a colt's until the life-giving heat flowed through every tense muscle and warmed his bones like the breath of God. Then Nat refilled the bucket with cold river water and flung it on the boy from head to foot till Johnny yelled for mercy. "Thunder and lightning! I reckoned that 'ud fix ye," yelled Nat. "Now take up the towel and rub the hide off yourself, boy."

Johnny came up from the treatment pink and prancing with all the kinks and cramps gone clean out of his tired frame. But that

was not all. Nat made him lie down flat on his belly on a rock and then with the palms of his strong hands he bore on with all his weight gently working the muscles on each side of the boy's spine snapping them up towards the shoulders. He ran his hard expert thumbs up and down the knuckles of his backbone until Johnny thought he would come apart.

"Where'd you learn that?" the boy asked Nat as he slipped into his shirt and pants again.

"That? Why, that's old stuff. Very ancient medicine. I got it from a gypsy once. Makes you feel pretty slick, eh?"

Back at the wagon the German couple had a dish of fried bacon ready, and the woman made Johnny drink a piping brew of sassafras tea and spruce sap. She smiled and watched him gulp it down. "Goot poy, goot poy!" she said, and rubbed her large hands with pleasure. Johnny's breakfast disappeared like mist before the sun. Wagons of other settlers now began to pass by, wet and battered by the storm but pushing on over the bumpy log bottom of the corduroy roadbed, pots clanging and harness creaking. When the time came to say good-by they thanked their hosts and set off up

river again with some squirrels Nat had shot tucked into his pouch for lunch.

"By to-morrow night," said Nat with a good deal of satisfaction in his voice, "we'll reach Otsego."

VIII

Parting of the Ways

IN the month of June, 1793, there was one short street to the very new village of Cooperstown at the foot of Lake Otsego. Along this dirt road, about a dozen small frame houses stood back under pines and chestnuts. A little apart, and a good deal more pretentious, was the so-called Manor House of Judge Cooper, built in 1789 when he had first brought his wife and infant son, Fenimore Cooper, to live in the wilderness.

But the most striking house in the settlement was the long one-story log tavern of Major Griffith which blocked off the western end of the village street. Here was the center of community life, where traders met to barter with the Mohawk Indians. Just a few months before Johnny set out on his western journey, the first weekly mail coach had come plunging over the new Canajoharie road with letters and parcels of merchandise. The bar of Griffith's Tavern was the post-office.

Nat and the boy arrived late one afternoon at the hamlet of Springfield at the head of the lake after eighteen miles of steady going from the Mohawk. Johnny was relieved. His moccasins, so new and strong when he had left home two weeks before, were now broken through and his bare toes stuck out, bruising themselves at every step. He sat down wearily on the gravel beach and looked about. Aside from two or three occupied cabins, he was gazing upon the charred remains of a settlement. Brandt and his Mohawks destroyed this place and massacred the inhabitants in 1778 on their way to the greater but no less terrible slaughters at Cherry Valley and Wyoming, further down the Susquehanna. Johnny recalled the story of his father's friend, Gore. Things like this had not happened on the Connecticut with the red men for over a hundred years. He felt he was truly drawing near the limit of white man's country.

The hunter returned in a few moments. He had been searching out his hidden canoe. They stepped carefully aboard and Johnny took the bow paddle, kneeling on the bottom. He had long been familiar with these subtle and delicate craft on the

waters of the Connecticut. As they paddled rhythmically along over the surface of the lake, Nat told Johnny little odds and ends of local history. How there were over two thousand orphans in Tyron County alone as a backwash from the Indian warfare of the Revolution. He told him that the great Indian trader, George Croghan, had owned all the land now held by Judge Cooper, and that Croghan's hut was still standing at the further end of the lake, used as a smoke house on the Cooper estate.

It was a nine mile paddle among beautiful wooded hills to the other end of the lake. As they approached Cooperstown, the evening sun lit up the many small panes of the windows in Griffith's Tavern. Nat told him that the hill before them was called the Hill of Vision. From its crest a man could see the land fall away westward for the first time since the Hudson River. Behind, the Mohawk tore away eastward to the Hudson. Before, the still waters of Otsego slipped quietly westward, on their long wanderings through the upper Alleghanies to make the great river Susquehanna. Johnny was crazy to slip along with them.

Nat beached the canoe, and turned it over

as a caution against rain. Then the two travellers entered the tavern door. Griffith, the large-bellied good-natured host, was lighting tallow dips in the iron sconces along the wall above a pine trencher table that stood at one side. A rough bar was built into the opposite or kitchen side of the room; and behind this, several big casks of beer, rum and rye whisky showed their shadowy bulk. Sawdust was on the floor and a small fire burned in the fireplace, just enough to cook by. Some sort of meat was roasting on a spit. The smell was good.

Three men at one end of the long table looked up and Nat nodded to them. "Men," said Nat with a touch of pride, "this is my friend Jonathan Chapman, a wilderness hound from Springfield in Massachusetts. Johnny, this here is Monsieur Le Quoy." A man of stocky build with black, burning narrow eyes rose from the table, bowed to Johnny and said, "Pleasure."

"And this is the Reverend Hartwick of Hartwickville just down the river." Johnny looked across the table to where a great-framed old, old man with shaggy hair sat huddled over, glaring at him, and he thought he never had met such a piercing gaze in all his life. The old man nodded

darkly but didn't say a word. The third of the group was a young man with the copper impassive features of an Indian, about the boy's own age and in buckskin hunting clothes. "Abeel," said Nat, "son of the great Cornplanter." The red man grunted and smiled at Johnny with his friendly eyes. So they all sat down together.

Griffith the host strode over from the bar and plunked down pewter tankards in front of the latecomers. His kindly presence made everyone feel at ease. He was a large barrel of a man with enormous shaggy eyebrows which raised like blackbird's wings up across a broad forehead. His eyes were mild and blue and knowing. "This is the very stuff to pick you up," he said. "Once a man is well sweated on the trail, nothing like spruce beer to pick up his guts and put juice back in his veins, eh, men?"

Johnny, glad of this bitter, cooling draught, thanked the innkeeper with relish. The other men, joined by Nat as an interested onlooker, had taken up their previous discussion. Griffith winked at the boy, "They're laying out the Beaver Wilderness into house lots," he laughed, and went back to the kitchen.

Johnny was left alone with his thoughts.

He could hear all the voices in the room, see the flickering eyes of the candles, and he seemed perfectly aware of everything at once happening about him, yet he was not there. He hovered in space, curiously looking back to the day he had left his home on the Connecticut. To what end after all had he come so steadily all this way?

He was not a trapper. He was not a trader. He did not want to make a fortune. Yet something drove him onward. With a burning zeal he desired to be of some use in helping his fellow men settle this wilderness. He wanted to help plant and build, yet not for himself. He could not forget the apple tree in his front yard at home shaking down its blessing of snowy blossoms the morning he had left. His mind attached a magical importance to that sign. He waited for another such sign. He felt it to be at hand.

He looked up and saw with a start that the burning fanatical eyes of old Hartwick were watching him across the table. To relieve his momentary embarrassment, Johnny leaned over and looked to see what the group of men was about. Abeel, the young Indian, was tracing a rough map with his dark finger on the pine table top

with the frothy slops of beer. "Here to here," he was saying, "Middle Mohawk to Conboy's Castle. Here to here," and he made a sudsy smudge with his palm, "the Deerfield Mountains, sixteen miles to Wood Creek and Baron Steuben's place. Good walk for men, and wagons can go. Here to Black River very hard go twenty-four miles to middle of Couch-sach-a-rage, the Beaver Wilderness of the Long House. Those French, what you say your friends, buy there?" He turned to Le Quoy.

The Frenchman became excited at these words. "It ees a mos' beautiful place. I have been. Zeer are meadow so wide by see belle river wiz much grass." He turned to Nat and Johnny. "My fran's from Paris, M. Chassanis an' Ray de Choumont have buy all zees lan'. It ess to be call Castorlan'. Zee parfac state in nature. Everybody work for everybody his happiness. A very noble idea, what do you think, my fran's?"

Johnny's eyes were shining. It sounded wonderful to him. Le Quoy noticed this and said, "You come up to Castorlan'. Dees are very cultured gentlemen of France. De library will have two thousan' books of zee very best classic. You will find it a very

noble idea. Nat, my fran', he will take you there. It is zee great future."

Hartwick, the old man, reared up his huge frame above the table and looked down at Johnny. Everybody seemed to be using him to point their argument. "Look ye," he said in a deep harsh voice, "why go so far afield when here on my river I have laid out lands fit for the like of you to settle upon. You can go to the very door of this tavern and see the borders of a future city watered by this lake and river. God and his church shall watch over you, and strong men a-plenty will be by your side to help build your houses and plant your fields." The old man swept a contemptuous sleeve across the watery map and obliterated the Frenchman's wilderness. He reached down and traced a line of his own. "There runs the Susquehanna, the river of life. A new Eden will spring up here." He paused sententiously.

Nat broke in with mock innocence. "And many a nice plump Eve to rear and bear the children of Eden?" He looked mockingly at the old man.

"Shipman," old Hartwick fairly roared in reply, "bring no frivolous curse upon this land. Chapman, my son, remember the wil-

derness must be subdued by manhood. Beware the softening power of womankind." He strode out of the room while the others burst out laughing.

Le Quoy held aloft his mug of beer and sang out: "A la tienne, tienne, A la tienne, mon vieux, Sans ces garces, les femmes, nous serions tous frères!"

Griffith came over, a broad grin on his jolly face. "He fears women more than the Devil. It is almost too easy to tease the old codger. He owns so much land and is so damn fussy about settlers."

"Why does he hate women?" Johnny asked.

"He thinks dey will come between his soul and God." Le Quoy spoke slyly. "He mus' have been very scart when he was a leetle boy, sometime. You will not be scart?" He looked at Johnny amusedly. "Well, frans', good-night. I mus' go also. Do not forget Castorlan'."

Griffith sat down in Le Quoy's seat. "The Frenchman is a fine chap, once governor of the island of Martinique but comes here refugee. Lordy, what a bloody revolution those French lads did put on. It seems a shame that all these gentlefolk like this Castorland crowd should come so ill

prepared all the way from Paris. Two thousand books! Ha, what they need is two thousand axes."

"I would prefer farther west," said Johnny.

"And just why?" Griffith looked at the boy sharply.

"It's very hard to say in so many words, Major Griffith," Johnny answered, "but ever since I was a little boy, something in my blood has made me want to go west and keep on going until I found the very edge of things. This isn't the edge, not even here. I want to help plant the wilderness. It isn't much, but it's what I was born for. Nothing else matters. You have to aim at something and stick to it. It makes you happy. I am to be a planter." The boy suddenly paused at finding himself talking so much. He smiled at Griffith and the others. "It gets me excited to think about it." He smiled again apologetically.

Abeel, the Seneca Indian, had been watching Johnny darkly. A fire of sympathy seemed to spring up between the two and he reached over and plucked Johnny's sleeve. "Day after to-morrow, I start down the river in my father's bateau. You are

strong. You come help work the boat. I drop you ashore at Tioga. What you say?"

Nat sitting beside Johnny nudged him in the ribs. The boy saw that Nat approved this chance. "All right," said Johnny. "It's accommodating of you."

"Come in the morning. I show you." Abeel got up and left quietly. Nat and Johnny picked up their things and walked to one of the small log outbuildings near the Cooper mansion. Nat told Johnny he was to sleep in the original hut of old George Croghan, the great trapper and Indian trader who had first settled on this lake. "They use this place for a smoke house nowadays and sometimes I sleep here. I fancy myself as guest of that rare old Irishman."

As they went to sleep, Nat spoke casually to the boy. "You are all right now. Trust Abeel. He'll set you well along your route to Pittsburgh and the Ohio country. You don't need me any more. You should take things on your own from now on. 'Twill do you good."

Johnny went to sleep wondering why Nat had made this speech, a long one for him, at this particular time. In the morning, the lad woke with a start. The sun

was already up. Nat was not there. He dressed and as he was doing this, he saw Nat's tomahawk lying beside the bed, with a piece of paper tied to the handle. Johnny picked it up and read: "Had to go on. Come and go, that's your friend Nat. Step along, lad, and keep your tail up. This weapon may help. Take it and good luck. Nat."

Just like the huntsman. Casual and honest as the primeval wilderness. He picked up the nicely balanced razor-sharp tomahawk and hefted it lovingly. He felt the time of his manhood had come. He went out and down to the lake wondering where the flatboat of the Indian was moored, when he heard hammering from a few hundred yards west. He went along a narrow path and came out of the undergrowth down an embankment upon the edge of a slick-running stream. He knew at once this was the headwaters of the Susquehanna. To his left beyond a small island he saw a shimmering glimpse of wind-swept lake. Then a voice hailed him.

Abeel stood up from the low bottom of a double-ended flatboat and beckoned. It was a solid craft about thirty feet long, made of strong oak ribbing and spruce planks. The Indian was hammering to-

gether a bark shelter amidships. He nodded and went on with his work talking to Johnny in snatches. He used long hand-wrought nails for driving into the four corner stakes, and then tied the top ends of the chestnut slabs to roof poles with thongs of tough, pliable squirrel skin.

This was to protect their food and to sleep in if it stormed. They would carry a tent too and camp along the bank for the several nights their trip should take. "The water is high now after the big storm," he said, "and we make very fast trip. A little dangerous, maybe." He looked slyly at the boy but saw no sign of timidity and seemed pleased. "Where is Nat?" he finally asked.

"Gone," Johnny answered, somewhat chagrined to have to admit it.

"Just like Nat. Maybe he come back before to-morrow. You no can help now. All ready in the morning this time. You come along then and bring your truck."

Johnny looked embarrassed. "But I haven't any truck, Abeel. Just these frazzled old clothes, a pair of socks and some flannel drawers. Money all gone, no gun, no food, nothing but this tomahawk Nat left me."

The Indian grunted and smiled. "What's

the matter? Make everything new all the time. When we get Tioga me will get squaws fix you up with hunting shirt." He looked at Johnny's bare and bruised feet sticking through the worn-out moccasins. "You won't need moccasins for boat. You get those Tioga. Got plenty everything at Cornplanter's."

Johnny started to thank him but the other lad only grunted and went on weaving in strips of bark to the low shelter he was building. He seemed to have forgotten his visitor. Johnny started slowly back towards the lake following the course of the stream straight up past the island through a grassy meadow where he was astonished to see on the northern slope of a cleared space a large well-cared-for and ancient stand of apple trees. His practiced eye figured them at least seventy years in growth. Lordy, he thought, that brings it back before George Croghan first settled here. They must be a planting of the Iroquois.

He walked under their spread of awkward branches and put his hand upon the solid meat of their twisted trunks. He felt himself a boy back in Springfield, standing under the old tree in his father's yard. The

new-sprung leaves of early June rustled together in the morning wind. The little knobs of green apples knocked together and fell down into the grass. He picked one up and rolled it in his palm dreamily. Lonely settlers in far places must miss staple fruit so hardy and enduring, so suitable for northern climates——

Looking up, he saw Hartwick, the old preacher, coming slowly towards him like a creature of earth, bent over and shuffling with age yet coming on with an unavoidable aim and purpose. In one knotted fist Hartwick carried a scroll of finely split birch bark. Over his bent shoulders, the other fist supported a skin bag. Hartwick held out the bark scroll. "A map for your use in the wild forests, my son," he said. "On it you will discover signs of danger all marked down. Also the places fit by God for his race to dwell in." Johnny took the map.

"And here I will give you a greater treasure." He unslung the bag from his shoulders and shoved it also at the boy. It was made of buckskin and seemed to Johnny to weigh between five and ten pounds. Before letting go the bag, the old man dipped into it with his skinny fist and pulling out a handful of dark shimmering apple seed, let

it fall back again before the astonished eyes of the boy, a rich, coppery flood.

"These trees," said old Hartwick, waving his arm, "these trees of the Six Nations which I have taken over and nourished with the sweat of my brow, have cast down this good seed to fructify the wilderness. You have taken them. The duty is on you. God has so disposed." The old man made the sign of the cross shakily against Johnny's smooth young forehead. "I put His sign upon you." Then old Hartwick hobbled away out from under the green roof of the orchard. Johnny could neither speak nor move until the preacher was out of sight and hearing.

He was caught. He believed. He lifted up the bag and hefted its precious load. "Assuredly," he told himself, "someone has to do this work. I have been waiting for a sign, for some token of luck, and here it is." He pulled the thong of the bag tight closed and slung it over his back. He tucked the scroll of birch bark into his shirt and set out for the smoke house. One of the dark little seeds had stuck to his hand. He put it between his white teeth and savored the bitter, aromatic taste of life concentrated in the kernel of the seed.

IX

The River Serpent

THE night before the expedition was to start Johnny lay still upon his bunk and listened to the ringing noises of the night woods. Looking out through a square of window cut in the log wall, he saw the slow stars march across a patch of velvet sky. A cool wind kept gently blowing all night long. He missed Nat yet he was glad to be alone.

The wind abated a little before dawn. The stars, pricked out so brightly in the square of window, began to fade. Gradually the world grew gray and then snapped into life with the sun. Johnny lifted his precious bag of apple seed, tucked his tomahawk in his belt and shoved his horny and weather-toughened feet into what was left of his moccasins. A large triangle of bare shoulder spoke for a sharp limb along yesterday's trail, and the hairs of his legs feathered out through the gaps of home-spun.

He didn't care. The wind was coming

strong from the northwest. He whistled shrilly as he worked his way down through the tangled trail to the flatboat.

Abeel, busy at chores, looked up hearing the soft footfalls of the boy, and raised his hand in an Indian greeting. Two other men were on board. They had come with a wainload of cargo from the settlement; a few bales of blue shirts, bright blankets, four or five casks of red-eye whisky and some sacks of flour and Indian meal.

Johnny met the crew—Sammy, a strong blond-headed man of about twenty-five with a good-natured face, and the other, an older half-breed, dried-up and morose. Abeel left the two loading the stuff aboard and told them to get a breakfast ready in half an hour. With Johnny he went up to the riverhead for a swim. Johnny was satisfied that Abeel knew his business.

The lake lay before them shining like a silver stone in the rough palm of the hills. Whitecaps smiled upon the leaping waters, and a tattoo of eager waves hurriedly slapped against the gravel beach. Wading out into deep water, the boys stepped carefully out of the way of the dri-ki or dead timber and water-logged roots which always line wilderness lakes. A false dive

might mean a broken neck. They swam offshore and up the lake a few hundred yards, and pulled themselves out dripping and glistening in the sunlight to stand upon the rough crest of a cone-shaped rock.

There was just enough space for these two, the bronze and the white, to stand there back to back shaking the water from their eyes and hair. Abeel the red man was a sleeker creature, not so tall, more supple and maybe not as strong as the rangy, angular white. But there was a woodland ease about Abeel which Johnny would never equal, for Indians are like to nature herself, where the whites are too often the enemies of nature in their desire for mastery.

The red and the white, back to back, stood there upon the famous Council Rock of the Long House, the greatest Iroquois landmark of the Mohawk country where year after year for three centuries, the jealous tribes had come together listening to the ancient ritual called The Meeting at the Wood's Edge. This was the book of Indian law and wisdom handed down by the word of the chiefs to settle all feuds and difficulties arising within the Six Nations; a covenant of peace. Hay-en-watha, the law giver, had made this league three hundred

years before, and only within Johnny's lifetime had the league been destroyed because of a white man's war. Memories of the great and tragic history of his nation ran hotly in the thoughts of Abeel as he stood there, and he was sad. He slipped away from the rock and was gone like an eel before Johnny, coming out of an ecstasy of contemplation, realized that he stood alone. The rough stone which he did not know was the Council Rock felt good under the grip of his strong toes.

Johnny plunged into the water and felt himself part of the river. It gave him a strange feeling to have the clear waters of the lake slowly take hold of him, steer him along to the outlet and then slide quickly down as if it must take him safely through to wherever he wished to go. As he crawled out at the shallows he smelled roast venison and licked his lips. When the had eaten ravenously and imagined himself stronger minute by minute, Abeel took Johnny over the boat on which they were to navigate the Susquehanna and explained the working of it. He had seen craft not unlike it used as ferryboats on the Connecticut. Each man of the crew had a long ashen pole shod with an iron point. In the reaches of the river

where there was very little current, two men took each side of the boat, walking from bow to stern, one after the other, setting their poles into the bottom and putting their back and shoulders into the work of sliding the long boat beneath them. A speed of four miles an hour in slow waters was possible and in the swifter current with much less effort, it could be guided along at six or seven. If the boat averaged five miles an hour for a day's trip, that was good time. Abeel thought they would make a fast trip with the water so high.

As they poled out by Mill Island and took the center of the stream, Abeel pointed out what was left of the log dam General Clinton had built in 1779 to raise the waters of the lake in order to float his two thousand men down river in pursuit of Brandt and Queen Esther after the Wyoming massacres.

Then off they put and Johnny had time for nothing but the clumsy practice of his new art.

Abeel worked one side of the boat with Johnny, Sammy and the half-breed the other. As the morning wore on without event, Johnny's back and shoulders began to ache and his eyes were dazzled from

staring down at the dancing river waters. Out of the corner of his eye, he was aware of the tall forest marching slowly astern. He set his jaw and tended to business. The wet pole chafed his hands. It was long and unwieldy and difficult. One moment he found shallow, hard bottom and the next a depth of sticky mud. Sometimes it took all his force to tug the pole free when the stern came gliding up to his straining feet. Then he lost rhythm and his work was doubled. But he had been bred to hard work; and in its way the salt sweat stinging his eyes was a chosen kind of torture. And always, they were moving westward.

Toward noon, the flatboat coasted easily to the bank, and Abeel tied up for a quick meal. The soft dappled shade of the riverside trees came down like a blessing to the fagged-out Johnny. He wolfed his food and stretched out on his back. Life in the woods had long ago taught Johnny the wisdom of completely letting go when the chance offered; to save his strength for need. The crisp leaves of the birch trees whispered him off to sleep. He was lost in the lazy world of noon.

When they took up their journey in the afternoon, luck was with Johnny. For

about eight miles on their way, the stream quickened under the keel and the old tub felt light of foot. One man at either side and Abeel to steer was all she needed to keep her course, skidding over the restless muddy waters at a six-mile clip. Johnny, let off from work, propped a sack of meal against the forward end of the shelter. Sometimes he studied his map which Hartwick had given him. Once Abeel came forward and explained it to him.

The long course of the Susquehanna wandered southwest over the slippery yellow surface of the birch-bark in hard black ink. Johnny could picture the old man cramping his quill in gnarled fingers to trace out this useful picture. He smiled to notice a crude skull and crossbones marking the rapids at Wyalusing. Here and there, by the abandoned site of Queen Esther's Town and Cock-eyed Billy's Tavern, were red circles showing good meadow lands free for settlement. Long mountain ranges like bird tracks crawled north and south, ridge after ridge from the Susquehanna westward. Johnny was caught particularly by the great range of the Alleghanies called the Bald Eagle Mountains.

He rolled up his map and chucked it be-

neath the bark shelter, leaving its study for the journey's end. Now the heart of the wilderness quietly unfolded before his gaze, as the long boat slid through wooded hills, lurching and bobbing on the flood of waters. Johnny felt that the boat and all on it had become a part of the river as the river was part of the wilderness and the wilderness a part of the great pattern of the unlimited world. He and nature were one. Everything flowed to a single rhythm. The wind upon the tree tops, or rippling the river grasses of the open meadows, the fleet of cloud-shadows upon the distant hills drifting together, the weaving flight of the kingfisher looping down the stream before the boat, and over all the constant monotonous singing of the river, even the regular pumping of the blood in his veins, all answered to the same tune.

Such bliss was too good to last for long. As darkness approached, the current grew slack beneath the keel, a sign, said Abeel, that they were drawing down to Unadilla Creek and Wattle's Ferry Tavern, where the Catskill trail comes across from east of the mountains. Abeel could not know that within two years, by 1795, a through wagon road along the trail would rumble with the

traffic of thousands of new settlers for his fathers' hunting lands.

Now all four of the men must put their shoulders once more to the ash poles. The land around the mouth of Unadilla Creek was marshy and low-lying. They drew near and saw the log tavern set back a few hundred yards from the wharf. They drifted by. A man shouted and waved his arm. Abeel waved back. He knew the people. A half-mile further on, they headed into the alders and pushed up the mouth of the creek a hundred yards to high enough ground for a camp.

No sooner had they made the boat fast than an army of "no-see-ums" or "punkies," black flies and mosquitoes rose up with halleluiahs from the surrounding swamp and set to work on the sweaty carcasses of the weary men. The crew stopped for no council of war, but scattered for birch-bark and firewood. Johnny found an old stump full of moist rotten pulp and brought in an armful to make a proper smudge. With his father's flint and steel, he sent a spark into the paper-like skin of the oily birch and had a crackling flame. Then they heaped on the rotten wood and made their smoke. Presently Abeel came back from a clump

of sugar maples with a handful of pennyroyal which he pounded to a paste and mixed with bear's grease into a pungent aromatic salve. The men took gobs of it on their finger tips and smeared themselves.

Johnny was most to be pitied, for his badly torn shirt gave no protection. Abeel slathered the grease over the lad's shoulders, back and arms. It soaked in to ease his tired muscles, and the pennyroyal discouraged the insects a little.

While Sammy and the half-breed were cutting firewood for the night and Abeel was roasting some corn cake, Johnny cut an alder pole, found some worms, and a little frog, and picked his way out over the uncertain tufted swamp to a point where the creek and river met in a deep pool. The noise of his coming sent a flock of sheldrakes skittering across the river. When the water quieted, he could see sudden ripples where one or two big trout were lazily rolling below the surface.

He put on the little frog and cast his line. Only a horde of little five-inch fry kept nibbling until almost all his bait was gone. A half hour passed. Johnny was ready to quit when a large white moth miller caught in the puddle at his feet, flut-

tering with wet wings to free itself. He caught, and cast her. He could hardly see where the fly landed except for a lick of silver where the line picked up the skin of the pool.

Swish! His line was taut and his pole bent double. He quickly waded out waist-high to keep his tackle from parting. The fish bore down seesawing to break the hook —an old mossback. Ten minutes later he reached down and caught the trout under the gills, a nice chunky three-pound square-tail!

Abeel was delighted, deftly split it up the back, cut the neck, hooked out the guts and pan-broiled it with strips of sowbelly. The Indian could see how Johnny could carry his own weight as a woodsman.

In the morning they found the flood of waters still held high. All day the flatboat slid along at a good pace, due south for twenty miles and around the great bend northwest to Chenango River. They tied up this second night ten miles above Tioga Point. Fireflies dripped like a golden rain from the trees along the riverside; and in the night a pesky porcupine made off with the remains of Johnny's moccasins. He forgot to hang them out of reach.

The next morning, when the dark hulk of their boat came coasting along the shining river and turned in at Tioga Point, Abeel was surprised to find his father's camp deserted except for an old squaw. She gave him the message to go on with the boat another hundred miles to Shamokin or Sunbury, where Cornplanter's people would meet them and bring the boat upstream again. For Johnny, the squaw found a new shirt and leggins and a pair of moccasins which she had been saving for Abeel.

Another hundred miles meant no great hardship. This was the wilderness and time was nothing. But it is never pleasant to expect a friendly camp and then come upon deserted habitations. And Johnny was sorry to miss exploring Tioga, an ancient Iroquois camping ground. Five miles up the river was the site of Queen Esther's Town, that fierce daughter of French Margaret, who had done such bloody slaughter at the Wyoming Massacre. From Tioga Point, all the western war-trails of the Six Nations made their start. But the river took hold of the keel and swept the flatboat on.

Abeel from his father's huts had brought

down a coil of hempen rope which he made fast to the stern-post. "When we get Wyalusing Falls, old river run between the mountains," he said to Johnny, "then we work boat down and over with tackle from the bank. A big drop, ten foot, and high water make some job work."

All the men spoke of Wyalusing and the rapids with a difference, and Johnny looked forward to this first smack of danger. He drove his pole into the leaping current to keep the boat true upon her course.

By noon of the third day, they tied up at Towanda Creek to inspect the craft and snatch a hasty meal. The hills were closing in upon the river bed, and the stream running in a narrow channel tussled and pulled at the free end of the flatboat where she was moored to the shore. The lazy serpent Susquehanna was waking up, was whipping about with a show of white fangs.

The four men made every movable thing fast. They tested the broad maple steering paddle, and looked up and down the worn length of the pick poles for possible flaws in the grain. Abeel once more coiled the length of rope at the stern, and Johnny, because the bag of apple seed held the center

of his mind, tied it under the boat's gunwhale by a crossbrace.

Five miles to the rapids. In less than an hour, they would tackle the falls.

Now with a hoarse squawking on ungainly wings, two great blue heron rose from the rocks on the west bank and flapped across the very bows of the boat. The half-breed yelled and banged his hat against the bark shelter as if to drive them back. They kept on. He broke into a string of curses in Mohawk dialect. Sammy looked up to grin at Johnny. This meant nothing to him. But Abeel scowled as he gazed after the birds, then turned grimly back to his steering oar. Johnny wanted to grin back at Sammy, but he could not. Something bothered him. He did wish they would reach the rapids and get it over with.

Now all of a sudden came the time. "She pretty angry, this river," Johnny heard Abeel shout from the stern. Johnny's job was to keep the side free from bumping the many boulders that swept by the boat. It would be fatal to let the craft catch and turn broadside to the racing waters. The river boiled over the hidden rocks and seemed to reach out white hands of destruction. The dark current midstream

coiled and twisted like an angry serpent. Abeel searched for the quiet backwater above the falls, supposed to lie along the eastern shore. The boat was tossing along like a canoe now, making at least eight miles an hour, barely under control. It was a terrific job to keep the pick poles from snapping out of hand.

The white water shot up on every side with a noise like thunder. It was like riding wild horses standing in the saddle. The roar of the Falls drew near. Johnny heard Abeel faintly shouting and pointing to the shore. A ledge of rock half way across the stream broached up the current in a hedge of angry breakers. Under this and directly above the edge of the falls lay the quiet backwash they were looking for. All four men dug in with their poles and heaved until the stout ash bent to the danger point. Reluctantly the water-logged craft pulled free from the midstream grip——

"Push, men! Push her by the Lord!" yelled Abeel. He grabbed his rope and made a leap for the bank as the undecided craft turned for one brief moment toward the shore. The water serpent was loath to let go.

Everything happened at once. Johnny

had set his pole and pushed with all his might, facing the stern. He saw Abeel take a twist with the rope around a chestnut stump. The lithe Indian dug in his heels and leaned back upon the rope straining every muscle to bring her to a stand. Slowly the rope wore around the stump sending up a smoke. Sammy and the half-breed at the bows bent frantically against their poles. The rope moved more slowly. They were winning against the river. Then a sudden scream of pain from the bows and a crackling of splintered wood. The half-breed, pierced by his broken pole, pitched head-first over the side and the current took him. The boat lurched and the rope payed out with new speed burning the skin off the hands of Abeel. The Indian cried out and the rope spun free. Abeel leaped and half missed the stern of the boat. He pulled himself in with Johnny's help. The craft turned and swung crazily out into mid-river.

Abeel's bloody hands were dripping. His face was a mask. Johnny gripped the gunwhale and looked ahead. The falls came sliding under their bows. Sammy with one wild look about plunged head-first over the side. He was swallowed in a flash. The

boat shot into the air. Johnny held his breath.

The flatboat seemed to pause and tumble with a terrific crash over the fifteen-foot drop into the pounding green waters below the fall. He felt the boat break her back beneath him. He clung blindly to the thwart brace. He felt a shock that almost snapped his neck and then went swirling with the wreckage around and around the great whirlpool under the falls. His one thought was for that bag of apple seed. He pulled himself along the side of the boat as the waters battered him and the current pulled at his dangling legs. Somehow he reached the brace where the bag was fastened and tugged at the slippery rawhide thongs. It came free. He took the bag in his strong teeth. Then as the wreck of the flatboat bobbed along the whirlpool edge near an outjutting log, Johnny lunged into the water and grabbed the butt end. Slowly he pulled his battered body along the log to shore.

His jaw fell open, his legs would not hold him. He collapsed, half-sitting in the shallow eddies and gasped for the breath of life. When he came-to his bag of apple seed was resting a sodden mass between his out-

stretched legs. Out upon the white tormented river, a black mass of wreckage went tossing and bobbing like so much matchwood down and away between the black boulders. All were gone, his friends, the crew. First the half-breed, then Sammy, and last, Abeel, with his torn and helpless hands. All this in an instant and there was the river unchanged ripping along downward to the placid sea.

Slow sobs shook him. His nerve was gone. Then his hand fell against the bag of apple seed. Slowly he pulled himself up the bank and lay down under the hemlocks. He felt his tomahawk still stuck in his belt, and his flint and steel were still tied to his belt in the little bag. For the rest the river had stripped him clean. His new outfit had gone down river with the boat.

He lay back. The woods were full of peace. Only a red squirrel, angry at his intrusion, chattered from a branch overhead. Even the anger seemed good to Johnny. Less lonely somehow. Slowly he tried his muscles. Sore but no broken bones. A spark leaped up in his breast. He would live to go on. He felt the wilderness had done its worst. He would live to go on.

X

Wilderness

LUCKY for him the night was warm. How did he know what the night was, how the stars came out or what the phase of the moon might be?

As he leaned back exhausted against the harsh trunk of a tree, darkness came down out of the sky and fell upon him body and soul. He sat there with his eyes tight shut and gulped at the lameness of sorrow in his throat and tried not to think of the boat-load of life, his friends, dashed to pulp and nothingness. Sometimes his fevered mind slipped away into half-dreams. Then the hungry growling of the falls, the unceasing hiss of the river serpent would louden and wake him with a start.

Once he saw himself standing in the sun with Abeel his friend upon the rock at the outlet of Otsego. He was full of joy to be going on the boat. He dreamed that he turned to his friend and laughed. But his friend Abeel was gone! O yes, the Indian

had swum ashore. That was all. He remembered it well now. But the tide of the sinister river kept dragging at his mind. He did not want to remember. He had to remember. The racket of the waters grew nearer. They were coming to the falls. "Look out, Abeel, the falls!"

Johnny woke up in the pitch dark, trembling at the echo of his shout. It was true. His friend of the bronze muscles, the quick smile, the quiet authority, was gone forever. All were gone . . .

Again he fell back half-dead, and tried to sleep. The night was full of river horror. The first days on the flood whirled through his tired brain. This was good. This he wanted to remember, but always the river grew in python power, and always he saw the waters of Wyalusing. Now it was not Abeel who stood at the danger point in the stern of the boat. It was his father. A second time, Johnny woke gasping in terror.

He got stiffly to his feet and forced his weak legs to carry him up and down in his cage of despair. He would not let the terrors of half-sleep destroy his soul. He must fight it out till daylight came to save him.

The forest began to gather ghostly form. A few sleepy bird notes dropped upon his

straining ears. Dim figures of mist moved vaguely above the unseen angry waters. The little wind that breathes at dawn made a stir in the forest. And then suddenly glory of bright morning prime came walking to a silent music down over the shining river and Johnny, trembling with joy, held up his hands and lifted his face to the sun god.

The strength of youth came back into him and with it an overpowering sense of hunger. If he could only eat! Then he could plan what to do and then he could act.

He turned slowly in the rays of the early sun and waited for his tattered rags to dry. He decided to push along downstream to find some quiet reach of the river to cross—for cross he must. He could not rest till he should put this last great barrier behind him. Watching the shore below the falls, he saw the peak of the freshet was well past, but the current as dangerous as before.

Turning back to his resting spot, with his tomahawk, Johnny carefully marked the big tree, making a white blaze. He laid out his soggy bag of apple seed at the root and started down through the woods and underbrush. He still felt a little wobbly. If he could only eat. But first the crossing. He must locate that. Parting the alders, he

scanned the river up and down. About a mile below the falls, Johnny pressed through the bushes to the bank and saw beneath him a long pool of slick-running water, where the deep bed of the river leveled out the surface. The swirling eddies told of a savage current, but there were no rocks. He gazed at the opposite bank and wondered whether he could make it. He could, with a raft and a pole, with only a light tomahawk, but it would take two days to make any kind of a raft.

Then his wandering gaze was caught by a strange sight. A fuzzy bedraggled bit of something came floating swiftly down the stream, but unnaturally. It made an erratic continuous diagonal towards the opposite bank. Nothing could drift that way of itself. Johnny shaded his eyes from the glinting water and stared hard. As it passed not twenty feet from him, he saw the furry head and beady eyes of a large squirrel propped up above the lapping current by a sizeable piece of bark which the creature held with its front paws, meanwhile digging away with its hind legs for dear life. Squirrel and chip together made a kind of ferry.

Johnny gazed spellbound. He prayed the

little creature would make it safely. In a few minutes far down stream, he saw the spot of brown move towards the shore in quiet water, drag itself out upon the opposite bank, draggled and rat-like. The squirrel shook itself and scampered into the forest without so much as a look behind. A sign, surely. Why not get a log big enough to float him and his bag of apple seed, and yet not too heavy to propel? Safe passage over in this way must be possible. He hastened back towards his apple seed at the hemlock by the falls. He was so hungry he even thought of eating some of the apple seed. No, that would be treason. Perhaps he could find berries instead, perhaps a bullfrog from the river. He must eat.

Under the hemlock tree, he suddenly heard a scrambling as if a small animal had been startled. Johnny and the animal both paused to listen. Then Johnny made a leap towards the spot where he thought the animal was hiding. His fear was for his apple seeds. Snatching a branch of wood, he cornered the creature in the bushes. Reaching gingerly down, he pulled aside the leaves. Precisely what he feared; one of those thieving porcupines again. The beast was all

bristled out like a pincushion, one beady eye glaring.

There came upon Johnny an overpowering and unknown force. It rose up in him. He wanted to kill, to destroy, to eat. He raised his club and hit out blindly at the porcupine. It shrank up at the first blow and bared long yellow teeth. Johnny was in a frenzy beating and jabbing at his prey. The little creature began to whine shrilly with the pains of death. It died hard. It hated to die.

Johnny dropped his stick and looked. He found himself trembling. Then his mouth began to water. He was starving for meat. Cautiously he turned over the porky with the point of his stick. Then he went to a silver birch and scaled off a handful of the papery bark in which to wrap the hind legs of the beast and protect himself from quills.

Hastening back to his bag of seed, Johnny found luck with him. There was a hole three inches long cut through the doe-skin but few of the seeds had been eaten. The bag could wait. Now for food. He took his tomahawk, gutted the porky and chopped off its head. One of the long gray and black quills pricked him. It made his finger sore. He went more slowly. Johnny

knew better than to skin the animal without a longknife. He remembered how the Agawam Indians had cooked porkies when he visited their camps from Springfield.

A fire. Johnny thanked God that his flint and steel had been spared him by the river-demon. Once his flame was catching well and a good ash making, he scrambled up and down the near bank of the river, looking for clay. He found a bank of earth left bare by the high waters in which he daubed the prickly carcass of the porky with handfuls of the sticky earth until he had a great ball. He rolled this delicately so that the quills would take the mud and not his hands. To make sure this would hold until the fire baked it, he wrapped the ball with a thick covering of wet burdock leaves.

Now the fire was great enough and the ashes ready for baking. He dug a hole in the fire-bed with his stick, popped in the porcupine pudding, and rebuilt the fire above it. Nothing to do now but wait. While he waited, with a sharp flint he made a series of eyelets in the slippery doe-skin of the apple seed bag along each side of the hole. Then he found a hickory sapling and peeled off long strips, separating out the white, fibrous inner bark. This he used for stitch-

ing up. He resolved that once across the stream, he would dry out the wet seed to prevent rot or sprouting.

Absently picking up his tomahawk, Johnny looked suddenly down at the flint he had used for piercing the doe-skin and burst out laughing until the tears rolled down his hollow cheeks. Why had he not used the point of his tomahawk? What a fool!

He gazed restlessly at the fire. "I wonder if it's done?" he asked himself and his flat stomach curling and uncurling beneath his ribs made plaintive noises. He could not wait. He poked out his steaming dinner from the hot ashes. The clay was baked hard. He cracked it open carefully with his tomahawk. The skin held in the clay by the quills gently came off the porcupine, and all that remained was a half-cooked naked little beast sending up a cloudy smell of roast meat. Johnny snatched up his dinner and tore into the hot flesh, burning his hands and tongue. No matter. How good!

Thoughtfully he cast the picked bones into the fire bed and licked the grease from his lips and fingers. That was that. He got up and stretched his long limbs. The current, yesterday so sinister, looked almost playful racing and leaping in the morning

sun. Life wasn't so hard, he mused, for the more you made yourself part of this wilderness, the less an enemy it was to you. Yet his face sobered and he thought of his lost friends. He set his jaw. He must find that log, tie his apple seed upon it and cross over the river. He wet down the fire, picked up his things and started for the lower pool.

He found the log, and tightened his belt. He let the eager waters take hold of him and struck out with powerful legs. The cruel currents of yesterday tamed within the reaches of this pool eased his passage down and across to the western bank. He crawled out and wrung the water from his rags and squeezed the apple seeds. He felt like a prisoner escaped.

XI

Overland Blues

A HUGE flat rock rested like a stone tortoise in the sun by the brink of the river. At one end, Johnny spread his soppy seeds to dry in the warm light; beside them he flung his own lanky bones and with a great sigh, let the sun god beat down new life into his back and thighs. As he basked there, he turned over in his mind all the stray tags of information he had gathered from Abeel in discussing old Hartwick's strange map.

"Here I am by the grace of God," said Johnny to himself, "safe and whole at the foot of Wyalusing mountains. If I leave the river I can strike cross-country and hit the west branch of the Susquehanna somewhere near the site of old Madame Montour's Indian fort. I might even hit the Iroquois War Trail. Abeel said a woods road used by trappers ran from the head of Loyalsock creek south to the Muncy hills on the big river. That sounds best. Once I make that

road, I will be near people and then it's only a question of time to Sunbury and the through turnpikes to Raystown, or Frankstown up the Juniata. It'll be hard but I'll shoot straight through the forest for the head waters of Loyalsock. All right, the first thing then is to climb this mountain and have a look-see."

Thus he reasoned out his course; and he saw that noon was upon him. He scooped up the dried-out seed like handfuls of shining coppery ants, feeling rich as he trickled them through his fingers. "A world of power in those seeds," was what he felt.

For a time he considered, then he picked out a tall hemlock and climbed as high as his weight would let him. His hands and arms and everything about him were sticky with pitch. Bracing his legs, he looked out over the lie of the land. Wyalusing mountain rose on its eastern face steeply, but a scattered army of tall pines marching up the surface, told him he would have a sure foothold. He figured the crest to be five miles away and not more than fifteen hundred feet above the river.

Sliding down the tree he cut himself a stout maple walking stick. He whistled as he worked. He felt he was on the trail west-

ward again. He slung his bag of apple seed high between his shoulders and set out. He wasn't afraid of the wilderness, nor did he doubt his strength, but he well knew that many a better man than himself had started out along unchartered country and never been heard of again. Still he began to believe in his own luck. He had been blooded by the river. What worse could happen.

Under the mountain, he discovered the brook he was following tumbled from a spring near the crest, and this guided him. His greatest difficulty was in getting around a mass of uprooted giant pine trees tumbled along the mountain side. He measured one of them with his arms, and reckoned it fifteen feet around and nearly two hundred feet tall. Virgin wilderness indeed. It must be fifty miles to the nearest white man's cabin.

"Even if I shouted till my lungs burst, nobody would hear me," he said to himself. Then he shouted. The echo came back fainter and fainter from the cliffside, hallo . . . hallo . . . hallo . . .. He did not like it at all. He was absolutely alone. He set off up the mountain as hard as he could go. He wanted to shake free this

towering mass of timber and lift up his head once more under the sky.

The crest was still wooded. But immediately below he saw an opening in the woods. From there, he felt he could get the view he looked for. As he came to the open ledge of rock, hot and glittering in the sun, he found himself slowing up. Something made him pause and sniff the eddies of hot air reflected from the ledge. He stood on the alert. It was the musty corpse-like odor of rattlesnake. He had sniffed it before near snake dens as a boy, so picking up a stone he flipped it over the drop of rock in front of him. Sure enough, the answer came, from three rattlers, not buzzing in real anger, but just a dusty warning that their sleep was not to be disturbed. Johnny decided the view would do from where he was.

And now his eyes, seeking the farthest horizon, marked the long cloud-like blue of Bald Eagle mountains southwest by west, very far away and yet even beyond them to the south lay the main ridges of the Alleghanies, barring the way to the Ohio country. Nearer to the northwest rose the Savage mountains; and faintly due south, a dim low-lying ridge that he guessed must be the Muncy hills. He remembered Abeel

and the map. He must keep these hills always on his left, and if he would strike the trappers' trail from Loyalsock to the west branch of the Susquehanna.

He pondered the miles of rolling woodland wondering where the Iroquois trail cut through the dark woodland turf beneath those million trees. He must find his way by deer trails and watercourses. Twenty-five miles south lay the headwaters of Loyalsock creek.

Treading softly over the mossy rock in moccasin feet, Johnny dropped into the shallow valley. His mind since mapping out a course was now at peace. Striding over the rise of the hill, he looked casually forward and came to a frozen stop. Many acres of burnt land shining blue as the sky with berries fell away before him and wading through the low blueberry bushes, scooping in fruit with hungry paws, were upwards of a dozen black bears. They were working down hill and the wind was from the west, so they had not got his scent.

But suddenly the nearest, not twenty feet away heard Johnny stir and turning, rose on its haunches and stared at the lad with an astonishment equal to his own. Then all the creatures rose up and stared. Perhaps

they had never seen a man before. Certainly Johnny had never seen so many bears. Each outwaited the other. It was very still. Then the nearest bear uttered a sudden pig-like squeal of terror, turned tail and shuffled down hill pell-mell, and all the others stampeded with him. Johnny stood like a statue and let the bears run.

A great sigh escaped him, since he knew these were the most shy and timid creatures in the woods unless their young were with them. Still, fifteen at one go would have been too many.

The berries weren't very ripe yet, but Johnny halted taking time to eat the topmost ones while his breath came back. He took a squint at the sun and made a noisy passage over the burnt land and down into the forest. He chose to camp under a big hemlock. Johnny felt like a midget. He had never before encountered such a tall growth of trees, making a gloom even in broad day beneath their reaching branches which seemed to push the sky up far away.

At dusk, his fire was blazing, and walking out from his little shelter he prospected around. He was hungry again. A bevy of wood partridge rose—the simple birds when far from the habitations of man show no

fear, but a hen-like curiosity. They roosted on a low branch and craned their silly necks at him. Johnny stood a moment. He always hated to kill—the porcupine which went after his apple seed had been an exception—and now he hesitated for a moment. But he had to live. It was the law of the wilderness stronger than feeling for his creature kin, which brought up his arm and sent his maple stick whirling. He knocked down two birds and ran quickly over to wring their necks. Now he could eat again. He was good for another day.

Spitted on a long green wand, dripping delicious grease into the fire, the two partridges looked pitifully small to Johnny. But compared to a diet of porcupine, it was a feast.

Night came down. The forest grew still. The whole world narrowed into the reach of fire-glow. Johnny sat back in the half-shelter of his lean-to. It was not entirely good to be so completely alone in these deep woods. They were so quiet even in full daylight. He missed the companionable cawing of the crows. Crows and song birds kept pace with the settlements as they pushed westward.

Beside the regular thumping of his heart

the only sensation of life came from the erratic arms of fire-light shooting out into the dark wall of tree trunks, then as quickly fading to make the solidness of black night even blacker.

The quiet of the night was immense in spite of a feeble murmur of insect noises. He mourned for the companionship of Nat, or Abeel, and thought how his father would have relished sitting out the hours of the night with him here in the firelight. Then he feel asleep.

Now and again the fire gave a little sigh and fell into ashes. Then from the mountain height a cry came floating down over the forest that made every stealthy, living thing stand still. Johnny himself woke with a start not wishing to move, scarcely to breathe. The dull glow of the coals fixed his eye. His sensitive ears tried to fathom what had awakened him. He listened with bated breath. Then came that cry, and the goose flesh prickled along his spine. The long-drawn, mad, distressing scream of a "painter"! He had never heard it before but he knew it at once. When it ceased, he could breathe.

He jumped up and threw fresh wood upon the dying embers until he had a brisk flame.

PIONEER WOMAN
A SKETCH FOR HIGHWAY MONUMENT

Of course these creatures wouldn't attack a man, he told himself, and yet a good lively fire . . . again that cry so dismal and ungodly, so full of madness and pain. Johnny was filled with a dread which he could not control. He froze in the very act of lifting fuel for the fire. He pictured a rippling shadow slinking along the ridges above him, and the glow of green eyes in the darkness.

He crept back into his shelter, now bright with fire-glow. He found his hand fumbling somehow for the handle of his tomahawk. He knew these creatures at heart were cowardly. But their cry was terrible. Towards dawn, Johnny fell once more into wholesome slumber.

XII

Sal

OFTEN the deadening repetition and monotony of days in the deep wilderness take hold of a traveller until he loses all sense of time. So it was with Johnny. Vaguely it was somewhere around the first of July, full summer, to him but that was all. He struggled through the unbroken forest steering by the sun. When he came upon shallow brooks, he scooped up an occasional trout, and the last day, he had to stave off hunger with a bullfrog caught in a great cedar swamp. Here the mud pulled at his legs when he missed his footing on the grassy hummocks, and he began to feel that the trees reached out in hatred with their scraggy branches to tear at his ragged shirt and trousers. His weather-brown skin, tough as it was from exposure, was torn and sore from brambles and the lashing of sharp twigs. His feet in their Tioga moccasins were hard and kept him up and going. Footsore, he never would have fought his

way. His hair became matted with pitch and sweat, and a fuzzy rubble of beard made his haggard cheeks more gaunt.

It took him three more days to thrash his way to the headwaters of Loyalsock Creek. On the last of these, from the hour of waking at the edge of a swamp, he felt a growing and uncontrollable fear surge up in his heart. He wanted to get out away from the sucking earth, the tearing brambles and the tall grasses, shoulder high, that hid from him the difficult deer trails. He even caught himself in the act of glancing backwards over his shoulder as he stumbled along. He couldn't stop, not even for food in midday, when he was hot and weary. He must go until he dropped, faster and faster, for the horror of the forest was all about him and at his back.

Then, at last, the ground pitched away to the south and became more open with occasional hemlock groves. He thought that he found a faint pathway through the sparse underbrush that looked more like a hunter's route than the animal trails he had been following. He saw the blue droppings of fox. Foxes eating blueberries—this meant burnt ground and maybe a settlement! Elation sprang into his heels, and he pressed

on down the sloping floor of the forest almost breaking into a run. He held himself from running. He feared the panic of open flight. But he could not trust himself.

When at last he came upon a large brook which he knew would lead him shortly to the creek he climbed a tree and eagerly scanned the forest. He was safe. He wept for joy and licked the salt tears from his grinning lips. Before him to the southwest, he made out the winding bed of a good-sized watercourse. Following with his eye, he gave a little shout, for lazily floating over the treetops at the edge of a clearing by the creek rose the smoke of a human dwelling place. He watched it curl up into the soft summer air above the shimmering water of the creek. He had never seen anything so beautiful. He felt he had discovered his fellowman for the first time.

Carefully taking direction, he shinnied down the tree and loped off toward the smoke.

The clearing had a deserted half-cared-for look, except for an immense pile of split wood carefully stacked against the north wall of the cabin. Now that he was there, Johnny hesitated in the shadow of the forest. Two impulses fought within

him—one to shout the good news of his safety through the cabin door; the other, that of the trained frontiersman, to wait until he could look over the ground. These scattered settlers were often queer customers and took a bit of studying.

For the most part, he saw burnt-over ground with the stumps of great trees still sticking in the soil. The far side was a bramble of berry bushes. Nearer was a patch of cleaner ground bordering on the steep bank of the creek, carelessly planted to maize and potatoes. Johnny thought he spotted the hand of a hunter rather than a farmer. He was amazed at the woodpile by the cabin, easily a year's supply already on hand. "They winter here," he thought to himself, "and take no chances when the deep snows come along." Then he gripped his maple stick and started carefully across the open ground towards the hut. The dwelling was quiet. The door was half open.

Suddenly a hound bayed and leaped snarling into the doorway where he was brought up sharply with a clatter of chain. Then a hand reached out, fastening on the dog's collar, and a woman's shrill voice commanded silence. The door slammed shut. Johnny didn't move. Then his eye fixed

upon the side of the cabin. One of the logs swung back as if on a pegged hinge, leaving a long narrow slot in the wall and out of this thrust the black muzzle of a squirrel rifle.

Johnny flung up his hands. "A friend," he shouted. "I mean no harm."

He felt someone eyeing him up and down. He could hear the growls of the hound dog, but no word. Then the log slowly swung back into place and the door flung open, showing a well-built woman of about forty, dark and wild, with the rifle resting on her hip.

"Who are ye?" she called, "and don't dast to move till I tell ye." Her voice was full of suspicion, yet Johnny felt that her curiosity was stronger than her fear.

"I've been lost, mistress," he answered quietly, and then with sudden conviction, "and I'm dreadful hungry."

The woman dropped her rifle. "All right, stranger, come on with ye."

Johnny walked over to the cabin door. The dog retreated. He could hear the woman talking to herself as she hung up her gun on two wooden pegs just over the door. "What a start he gave me . . . a man . . .

the wrong man from the wrong direction, cuss him."

Like most hunter's homes, the cabin was simple to the point of bareness. A low bed roped with rawhide and covered with a mattress of cornhusks, was built into one corner. The stove stood at the back and near the door, a pine board table and two crude stools. The two small windows at each end of the cabin had no glazing.

The woman shoved a stool at Johnny. "Ye look dead beat. Where from?"

"Under all the forest from Wyalusing mountains," Johnny answered, and meanwhile looked around at the wonderful comfort of a human habitation. He couldn't get enough of it. He sighed with pleasure.

"Terrible," said the woman, a cloud of worry on her deep-set hazel eyes, "a long and terrible lonely go. I'm right ashamed." She took some porridge of ground corn off the back of the stove. "Eat this hominy, my lad. You'll feel better. I'll fetch a drink for ye."

Johnny gobbled the hot porridge and absently watched her go out into the mellow afternoon sun and cross the clearing to a spring hole. The hound came over cringing from the corner and licked his hand.

"Everybody seems to be lonely," Johnny said to the dog, and they made friends. Then he heard voices approaching the cabin, but saw only the woman carrying a birch-bark bucket which slopped over with silvery water. She was talking to herself.

"Poor man, he looks hard-pressed. I'll feed him up and he can get in more wood for me. You shouldn't have been so hasty with that gun, Sal. You're losing your needful sense." Then she paused and shook her head sadly. "Lordy, lordy, why couldn't it 'a been him instead of this nobody out of nowhere." Johnny looked at her curiously as she came to the door and she seemed to catch herself. "I was just thinking," she said sourly, and turned away.

When Johnny had eaten, his hostess brought out a couple of corncob pipes and a box of tobacco twist, mixed with dried sweetfern. "Drink up some 'baccy," she said. "It's a great comfort." Johnny filled his pipe and drew in deep puffs of the fragrant smoke. The two of them sat down on the doorsill and gazed across the clearing. "What shall I call ye?" asked the woman.

The lad smiled. "Johnny will do," he said.

"Johnny what?" She wanted more.

Something unexpected came up in the boy. "Why, Johnny Appleseed," he answered solemnly and wondered why he had spoken thus.

"Mine's Sal, plain Sal," the woman replied without a smile. Then she went into the cabin and came to the door with a large gray linsey-woolsey suit of clothes. "You come in here, Mister Johnny Appleseed, and put this on. He'll lend it to ye, you're half naked."

Sal walked out of the cabin. He never thought to question the frontier law of give and take. The suit fitted him well enough, and it was strong-woven and clean. He looked closely around the room while he changed from his rags. He noticed in the shadow of the far corner near the hound's bed a little crib for a child made up ready for use. A pine cone dressed as an Indian papoose lay sprawling on the covers. A shadow darkened the doorway and he felt the woman behind him again. He turned as she spoke.

"My gal-child, she's gone. I can't quite remember if he took her or not . . . no matter . . . no matter. We needn't talk about it. Why did you ask?" Sal spoke sharply at the boy.

Johnny shook his head. "I hadn't said a word."

"Well, it seemed like you did to me. Why should I always have to try and remember? You really shouldn't ask me." She turned away in a gloom.

Johnny felt something strange in the air. Instinctively he held his peace. Something was eating at the heart and mind of this woman.

Now she came in again bringing wood for the fire, still talking to herself. "He's been away dreadful long. Went when the ice broke. Went down river with the furs on the freshet. He ought to be back, it seems to me. Maybe the little gal slows him up some. I just better wait. Better not talk about it. Everybody keeps after me so!" She ended, turning fiercely upon Johnny, then seemed to realize what she was doing. Her eyes came out of a dream. "No matter, you understand?" she mumbled, "no matter." She reached an ax from the corner and handed it to Johnny. "Here, you go out and split some more wood for my pile yonder. Got to keep the stove a-going. That's something."

The lad was only too glad to escape into the open air. He picked up the ax, hefted

it for balance and let fly at the wood, wondering all the while he was working what was the matter with this woman called Sal. She had a man and a little girl. Where were they, dead or alive? Three months now since the ice went out . . . pretty long to be alone here in the wilderness . . .

He stacked an armful of split wood, lifted it up and walked slowly around towards the cabin door. That woman was still talking to herself. How dreary her voice sounded now all the excitement was gone out of her. "Time . . . time . . . time . . ." he heard her repeating . . . "all mixed up again. Got his clothes on and it ain't him. Came from the wrong direction and all alone. Where's my little girl? He should have brung her." She was quiet for a moment and then: "Poor head, my poor head, he wants me to remember. Never! Never look back over your shoulder. I heard him say it when he went. All words . . . Sal, you just shut up. What will the tall stranger think of ye? Be still! Be still!"

Johnny stood still and trembled until he felt sure she was quiet. He must act naturally. He walked in, whistling a little tune, and plunked down the wood with a big noise over by the stove. "Pile it careful," she said

almost in a whisper. "Save wood against winter. Time takes a long time in winter. Oh, dear, Lord, but I like those trees to come down. I like to fall 'em. So many standing trees . . . so close. Excuse me, I guess I talk too much." She went over to the corner and flung herself down on the bed. "It's sundown now and time to sleep. God, if ye can sleep! If ye can sleep and sleep." She turned away from Johnny. "There's more blankets in the corner. A good-night to ye."

Johnny slowly filled his pipe and went out in front of the cabin. The sharp night-cry of a heron came over from the creek. The stars, igniting one by one, cut out a pattern in the open of the giant trees around the clearing. Eastwards, the crescent moon swung like a golden bowl beneath one burning star. Johnny looked about him and scented the dewy air of night, full of the damp leafy smell of the forest whose black trees pressed in all around this tiny clearing. Presently a screech owl fluttered softly in the near branches and began to cry, dropping its sad notes into the clearing. Johnny heard the woman stir uneasily. Then she came over behind him through the door. The owl kept on. "They whimper so,

Johnny," she said under her breath. "They whimper like little children. I can't stand it." With this, she broke into a flood of silent crying and clutching Johnny, bowed her head on his shoulder.

He didn't know what to do. So he stood and awkwardly patted her dark hair. In a little while, she stopped and stole back into the cabin. Johnny went to the door. "You all right now, Sal?" he asked quietly. She gave a shaky sigh. "Yes, thank ye."

"I'll watch out the night," he said, and rolled up in his blanket just inside the cabin door.

In the morning as Johnny was sloshing cold spring water on his face from the bucket by the door, Sal came out of the cabin and stood watching. "You mustn't think I'm crazy!" she pleaded, looking at him sharply.

"Oh, no," said Johnny, drying his face on his new shirt. "Just lonely. Talking to yourself is nothing. We all do that when we get lonely."

"Yes, nobody can help that!" she said, and went away to cook some breakfast.

Then Johnny got ready to go. He slung his bag of apple seed over his back. Before he left, he gave her a handful of the seed,

and she carried it thoughtfully into the cabin. "I shall remember ye by it, Johnny Appleseed," she said, standing in her doorway. "You'll find the grassy road yonder just across the ford of the creek. When you meet my man and little gal, you be sure and tell 'em to hurry back. I'm fair gone with lonesomeness."

"I'll tell them," was all Johnny could force himself to say for the lump of sorrow in his throat, and with that, he waved his hand and walked quickly to the bank of the creek. The cabin door slammed behind him.

When he came to the high bank, he saw a small grave about the size of the crib in the cabin with a cross of birch sapling sticking out of the soil. The soil was grassed over. Now he understood. He hastened across the ford, not wishing to have the woman see he had noticed. She might still be watching him.

He found the road, such as it was, and paced along. "I wonder where her man is?" he thought to himself. "Poor Sal. I must do something for her down below."

XIII

The Gang

FROM the West Branch to below the Juniatta, the Susquehanna River sprawls out among the lowland hills and forgets its fierce mountain history. Here is country favorable to pleasant living. There have always been towns; the towns of the Susquehanna and Delaware Indians, Shawnee towns, and now, at the time of this history, the pioneer trading towns, Shamokin into Sunbury, and Paxtang into Harrisburg.

Sunbury was a sleepy little place opposite the West Branch and the big island. Just a few trader's cabins and a sort of store and stop-off for pack trains headed up the Shamokin Path. Back from the bottom lands of the river heavy forests rolled away on all sides. The summer air hung heavily overhead. The sluggish waters scarcely made a stir.

One hot August day, two traders in their dugout canoe slid up to the Sunbury land-

ing. A young wanderer, much the worse for wilderness exposure, was with them. He was drawn and unwell. It was Jonathan Chapman. He followed the two men up to their cabin by the riverside. They made him a bed and he flung his bones upon the cabin floor and slept without moving for twenty hours. The next day he got up and ate a little and slumped down in the summer sun outside the cabin and stared across the gliding water towards the hills. And the next day and the next, he did nothing different. The boy was dead-beat. Nature can be pushed just so far by the will of man, and then she says: "My child, you must rest. You must sit on a log and rest or I'm done with you." Johnny was very much a child of nature. He let go and stopped fighting. All he wanted to do was to be left alone to soak himself in sunshine. For two long weeks, he ate and slept and stared into vacancy, and the two traders had sense enough not to bother.

Then, one day when he was gazing stupidly at the dark wall of the forest beyond the water, he noticed the small picture of a birch canoe slipping along under the green shadows of the further bank. Men got out. They looked like Indians. They went up

into a clear glade. Now Johnny saw a half dozen wigwams. Strange, he had been staring straight at this scene perhaps ten times before this day, but his mind had not been ready. Now something clicked and he was back again from a journey into the shadow. He saw and felt the real world and wanted to be part of it. He got into the dugout and started paddling over the river. He was surprised at his own weakness. The slim paddle seemed made of iron and the water dragged against his feeble grasp. He must have been pretty sick. He couldn't remember much. His apple seeds were gone, everything he owned except his tomahawk and his flint and steel was gone. His thread of life had almost frazzled out. What did it matter beside the glorious discovery that once more he responded to all the delicate sensations of being alive.

After dark days, events that seem miraculous may happen. Coming up the bank from the river towards the wigwams, Johnny met Abeel. He stopped and drew his hand across his forehead. More ghosts. . . . But the shade ran up to him shouting and grabbed him by the shoulders. It was real. Johnny stared and could not say a word. He reached out his hand and felt of

the Indian. Abeel was quick to see that his friend wasn't well. He led him gently up to the wigwams. Then Johnny came to his senses and leaned against a birch tree and wept for joy. Johnny moved over to the wigwams of his friend. By day, he fished the rivers with Abeel and gradually they told each other of their adventures. Abeel had escaped from the river serpent much as Johnny had, but knowing the wilderness better, he came straight down to Cornplanter's old camping grounds and found his people.

In the summer evenings, when the fireflies danced along the tall grasses and the soft air was vibrant with the ringing and fiddling of a thousand insects, Johnny heard stories. Abeel explained to him the signs they saw by day scratched and painted on the flat rocks at certain places on the Susquehanna. Signs which told of good fishing, told of wars fought by a people who lived in the valley before the Six Nations had conquered the Tuscaroras or made women of the Delawares . . . a long time ago. Johnny knew that a dead deer scratched on a rock with an arrow pointing meant poison water, and that a sign something like a Swastika meant pure waters

near by. Abeel spoke of old Indian trails; The Shamokin Path which lead up the West Branch back into the Bald Eagle mountains by the Montour towns and Cock-Eyed Billy's, clear to the Alleghany . . . of the old warpath up the twisting Juniatta and how the traders took it over and called it the Frankstown trail. Johnny got a sense of knowing the days long ago before even Croghan and Wieser, when silent files of the Iroquois trotted southwest year by year, conquering the whole wilderness until they held sway from the Great Lakes to the mountains of Kentucky. And once more a growing excitement made his feet itch to be following the sun westward.

The time came. The first brisk days of fall, Abeel packed up for return to the winter hunting grounds northward by Tioga. So the two young men said good-by, each one hiding his emotion, and one turned north to his people, and one turned south down the river to Harrisburg, to find a people which he could call his own. Johnny was weary of being lonely. He wanted to join the westward parade and throw in his fortunes with the Ohio seekers.

* * * * *

All the forty miles to Harrisburg along the river road he felt his new-gained manhood swell within him. He was only one of many adventuring men centering on Harrisburg and the western road in that fall of 1793; yet like most of the others, he thought of himself as an independent man, free from the laws and boundaries of the Atlantic civilization. He could hardly wait to cross the easy-flowing Susquehanna. Occasionally as he topped a rise of ground, he got a glimpse of the cloudy Alleghanies fifty miles away. They were a challenge and a promise. He was free to go there.

Free? About as free as one of a million little waves strutting on the unfelt surface of the flood tide. The little wave chooses to attack the rocky shore just as the rocks on the shore choose to stay put; because they are little waves and little rocks. Johnny chose to go west because he was a little wave on a vast unknown tide of white peoples which for many hundreds of years had been swelling westward from the lands of central Asia and Europe—Tartars, Huns, Visigoths, Vikings, Danes and Saxons; Lief the Lucky and the Puritan Fathers, and now Johnny and the wilderness-hounds, flooding up and down and over the barrier of the

Appalachians onto the great central plains of America. Johnny's eyes sparkled. There was spring in his stride. He felt himself master of his destiny.

He came to Harrisburg and the Susquehanna crossing. The ancient Indian town of Paxtang in the few years since the Revolution had turned into an overcrowded boom town for white traders. Conestoga wagon drivers and every variety of human who aimed for the western wilderness. The wild red men had given place to the wild Paxtang boys who murdered old King Shebeas and the last of the Delawares; and now the wild bullwhackers of the newly opened Frankstown Path called the place their own. The town was called after John Harris, the son of John Harris, the Paxtang trader.

To his surprise, Johnny found that he was hungry for people. He had his belly full of the wilderness after Wyalusing. He had also a plainer hunger from lack of grub. He enquired at a wagoner's stopping place, and found work for himself as a mender of broken vehicles. He was handy with tools and got a shilling a day and his keep. He bunked with the wagoners, a hard bunch of men, but he kept his mouth shut, and they left him alone. By day he never tired of

watching the big wagons with their teams of four and six broad-backed Conestoga horses come rumbling and swaying into the yard. Most of those which halted carried freight of cloth and other merchandise from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh and way towns. They changed horses here, leaving the heavy Conestoga draft animals behind, hitching with smaller wiry "dog-horses," better for the steep roads and bad footings —no excess baggage, all sinew and spirit. Johnny fancied himself in kinship with these nervy creatures. The hefty German-bred animals were all right for "Dutchmen" and farmers.

Working at the split shafts of hickory, or binding up the broken hoops of the towering white wagon-hoods, Johnny got to know and love every inch of these pioneering craft. Men told him that the best wagons were made of wood soaked three years under water to season it. Everything was planned in proportion to the difficult job of wilderness carrying. The wheel tires were six inches broad, and the bottoms of the wagons were tipped up at either end like a skiff to keep the loads from sliding on the pitch of the mountains. The harness was extra heavy leather, and the traces were

made of wrought chain. The body of the wagon was always painted blue, and the upper works bright red. Many loud and pleasant jangling bells hung from the horse collars.

It was a grand sight on a brisk morning to see two or three of these land schooners careering along the dusty road from Lancaster, to hear the mad racket of the bells, the harsh shouts of the bullwhackers, punctuated with the pistol crack of the long whips, and to see the great white hoods shining in the sun. Here was life. Here were people going somewhere. All the slumbering desire for the Ohio country roused in Johnny. He would sign with a wagon crew that very day. So he went down the main street to a shop marked Cordwainer and bought himself a pair of heavy boots with hobnails. Moccasins were no good for the stones of the mountain highroads. Then he looked around among the wagoners. He found a Conestoga freight wagon from Philadelphia shy one man who had the "swamp-shakes," and was drinking himself back to health at Lancaster. The boss driver was called Pat Neal. There were two other men on the load, indifferent creatures, but Pat had a roving eye and a

quick tongue which captured Johnny's fancy. He signed on for a one-way passage to Pittsburgh.

One fresh October morning, his wagon rattled over the stony bottom of the Susquehanna. The horses dipped their muzzles into the cool flood and drank, the wagon wheels flicked up silvery swords of spray against Johnny's legs where he and Pat lurched along on the high seat. Straining up the west bank of the stream, they struck a tolerably level road towards Carlisle. The rest of the wagon crew sat on bales at the rear with their feet over the tailboard, and shot tobacco juice at the stones in the road as they passed over. "By the little Lord of Heaven," Pat was saying, "It's a nice air to taste after sucking in the stink of them Dutchmen." Everyone was in good spirits. The day was crisp and the roadside trees were stained with the bright finger-touch of fall. Crows labored importantly from field to field, and blue jays flashed in the undergrowth. "Yes, sir, me boy," Pat continued, "when Hell overflowed, they went and made Dutchmen of the scum, so they did. The faces of thim, and the speech of thim. They don't understand Christian talk and if they did, they wouldn't, they're that stupid."

Johnny discovered that Pat liked to talk just to keep company with the rumble of the wheels, the creak of the harness and the sweeter jangling of the bells. Sometimes he sang songs which Johnny, for his soul's sake, wanted to forget and could not. Johnny was happy.

One night, coming into the stolid stone-built town of Carlisle, they put up at a wagon inn called The Moon and Seven Stars. Johnny made his bed on a mattress in one corner of the barroom and tried to sleep. The loud-mouthed boasting, the cursing and the bawdy songs, he did not mind; but the sorry picture of a man dragged out into the fresh air after a rough and tumble fight in the opposite corner of the room troubled him. Some fellow had knocked him out with a bottle and jumped on his face. Nobody seemed much disturbed and the drinking went on until long after midnight. Johnny found it hard to grasp the code behind the life of these men who worked hard, drank hard and loved to fight. He decided it must be what happened when men lived without a past worth recalling, or a future beyond the next meal, the next drink and the next woman.

In the morning, Pat was glum until a

fresh wind sweetened up his liquor-fogged senses. He hated the "Dutchmen" worse than ever. It was his favorite pastime. It cheered him to think of them! "The low-lives, the crack-pates, no fun in a dozen of the beasts, nor the wit of a setting hen. Did ye mind how he called us fusgaengers, and Christlos, unbelievers? Me! If me friend hadn't jumped him and laid him cold, I'd have wished the pleasure. And did ye mind the one that thought he was singing with his Kimboca made from the jaw bone of an ass, twanging and twanging? And did ye mind thim in the road outside rolling cannon balls to ease their big bellies, and the short heave carried the lot back again? Long Bullets . . . now that's a game for men, isn't it? Dutchmen . . . guts and wind, that's thim. Ged-ap, ye apes." Pat took a crack at the lead horse. Johnny surmised that a "Dutchman" once upon a time must have crossed Pat's life to no good purpose.

On the third day, they rolled into Strasbourg right under the mountains. These first ridges were named the Four Brothers. Here was where hard work began.

"We'll turn in for our flop to-night early,"

said Pat, "and get good and rested before tackling the Four Brothers."

After supper, they heard a noise of music and shouting down the street. Pat cocked his ear. "I'll take a stroll to uncramp me limbs," he said. In an hour Johnny went out to look for him. He was curious.

The racket came from a well-built, clean looking tavern such as merchants and high-class travellers used. On the oaken door, a large wreath of mountain laurel tied with crepe and stuck full of goldenrod sprays rustled gently in the evening breeze. A piece of parchment tied to the wreath and fixed to the door with the point of a hunting knife caught the lad's eye. A lantern swung overhead. He read the notice.

> "This is my testament. Let no man pull a solemn face at my wake. Let my friends enjoy themselves and make merry as this undersigned corpse made merry. I hereby set aside ten gallons of old port, the same of rye whisky and a sum of twenty pounds for hearty victuals. Spread a cloth upon my coffin and eat and drink. There will be no regret beneath the cloth; I command ye there be none above."
>
> John Lawyer, Host.

As the boy stood debating whether to go inside, there was a scuffle behind him in the dark and turning, he saw Pat with two large merry-looking German girls, one on either arm. Johnny smiled to himself, finding Pat's dislike of the "Dutchmen" thus tempered with mercy. The three of them made a rush at Johnny and tried to drag him in with them. The girls were strong farm wenches, and almost had him through the door before he broke free, not knowing whether to laugh or be angry. Pat was roaring with mirth. "Let the boy go, let him go. He's that petrified." The door slammed on a gust of singing fiddles. Now he was ashamed he hadn't gone in. Everybody seemed to be having a grand time. He told himself he must learn not to pull away so from meetings like this. These were his people now. These were the western pioneers.

Then he cocked his ear. The ecstatic whine of a bagpipe filled the road, echoing from the stone houses and a lone figure came swaggering out of the darkness into the light from the tavern windows. Johnny stepped back into the shadow of the door. He looked upon a Highlander for the first time in his life; the short stockings with a

dirk stuck in, the knobby great knees, the rumpish swirling of the tartan kilt, and all the insane swagger of the man. He looked at his face in the lamplight as he passed and repassed the tavern, beating a path. He saw two round staring eyes far away, fixed on eternity. He drank in the unseemly, primeval squirling of the pipes. The madness got into his blood. He stood trembling and hypnotized, listening to the voice of human death, the wailing and the triumph of infallible death.

Then the Scotsman marched away and kept on going with his steady strut back where he came from. Johnny could only follow. The pipes suddenly ceased and gave a sigh in the middle of a note. The night was black and lonely. Johnny walked on towards his sleeping place. A door slammed in the darkness and a heavy running of hobnailed feet came towards him. It was the piper. He hailed Johnny. "Turn about, mon, and come to yon tavern. Wes'll drink to John Lawyer, and a true Scotsman he was." Johnny shook his head.

The bagpipes had told him a lot of things. He went to bed with their challenge ringing in his ears. They reminded him that human life is full of sorrow and defeat, but

they echoed the cry of the human soul that dares to out-face death itself. Johnny wakeful in the quiet room, took stock of his days. A few months ago, he would have been shocked to have taken part in a frolic such as went on down the street. To-night he was a little ashamed of his humanity that he hadn't more easily gone along with the gang. If he was to love these people and give his life for the new pioneer state, he must know them in play as well as in work. Farewell then to the luxury of solitude and escape. He could find nothing but approval in his heart when Pat came rolling home singing at the top of his lungs a ballad that went like this:

"I've always been a poor girl, my fortune's been bad,
I've often been courted by the wagoner's lad;
He courted me daily by night and by day,
And then for to leave me and going away."

"Go put up your horses and feed them some hay,
Come and sit you down by me while you have to stay;"
My horses aint hungry, they won't eat your hay,
So farewell, loving Nancy, I'll feed on me way.

"Your wagon needs greasing, your bill is to pay,
Come sit you down by me while you have to stay."
My wagon is greasy, my whip's in me hand,
So farewell, loving Nancy, I've no time to stand.

"And devil a bit time either for proper sleep," said Pat, flopping down beside Johnny on the floor. "Lad, 'twas a grand frolic. You should have been there." Then he fell away into snoring that could only betoken the clearest conscience.

XIV

Wagon on the Mountains

GOD speed you, Johnny Appleseed. God speed you, Johnny Appleseed." The boy woke up with these words singing through his brain. His blood and body were charged with a new kind of power, come to him overnight. He remembered the dream this way. He came to a cabin in the woods. Everything was barred tight shut. From behind the logs, a lonely kind of moaning noise leaked out, and he felt terribly sad. He had come a long hard way himself. He wanted help and sympathy. Here was a voice that made his own need seem childish. He recalled digging with his bare hands beneath the logs of the cabin wall. The voice came clearer, but still muffled. He knew who it was, and yet couldn't say. Then he heard a man speak. It was Gore, the man who had come back to Springfield from Wyoming that cold winter. He couldn't remember the words but he remembered that he built a fire in

the place beneath the wall. The blaze caught and went roaring up behind the wall in a sort of chimney. There now, that will start something, he had said to himself, and the words of the people inside the closed cabin came clearly and full of happiness. He stood up wanting to laugh with the feelings of great relief, and the words had come to him in the voice of the woman Sal: "God speed you, Johnny Appleseed."

"What's that?" Pat suddenly said.

"What's what?" Johnny answered, coming back from the thoughts of his dream. "I didn't say anything."

"You did. You said, 'Johnny Appleseed.' Who in hell is Johnny Appleseed?"

"It's me," Johnny laughed.

"Well, then, Appleseed, me lad, hop along and look spry. The sun is up."

The heavy wagon rolled out of Strasbourg towards a tidal wave of forested mountains. Shortly the wheels spun more slowly, the harness tautened and squeaked. The ocean of the earth rose up under them. "Everybody off," commanded Pat. The narrow road was swallowed up in forest, winding along difficult ridges, higher and higher. Far down behind them in the quiet valley the west branch of Conecocheage

Creek slid along southward to join the Potomac. Johnny looked back only that once all the first day. There was an invisible force tugging with them at the wagon. Everything had west in it.

"Johnny Appleseed, put your back into it." He stopped daydreaming and braced his hickory pole beneath the slipping wheels and heaved. "Hump yourself, lad," urged Pat, and Johnny humped himself until he thought he had the whole of the Alleghanies in his back. He breathed hard and sweat trickled from the end of his hawkish nose. When he breathed, he breathed to a tune of his own devising, and the words to the tune

were "God speed you, Johnny Appleseed." He couldn't get away from that all the laborious day, nor for a week of days.

Long hours the wagon crew heaved and pulled to get their load of bales over the Four Brothers. When night came, Johnny didn't know whether it was rain or fair weather. He gulped his mug of grog, wolfed his corn pone and fell into blank slumber beneath the wagon in his sweat-burdened clothes. The third day they braked a twisting way down the western slope into the lower country and saw Sideling Hill fifteen miles away.

Pat gabbled pleasantly of love affairs and of the nature of the country they were passing through. He pointed with his whip to a heavily forested range on their right to the north. "The Black Log mountains. The Juniatta path, me lad, and that pass they call the Shades of Death. Trees so high and heavy the sun is fairly blotted out of the sky. It puts the fear of God in ye." Then he cracked Johnny on the back with a hard fist. "How's your courage, me boy?"

"First rate," said Johnny, and he felt it. He felt pride growing in him to be one of the pioneer train bucking these ranges. Rolling along this comparatively easy road,

the Sideling hills looked just like the ones he had come over. Too high for a wagon at any cost. Rolling along, he fancied the wagon was a squirrel in the cage of the arching sky, and that the high ground slipping under the wheels was a perpetual runway. Whatever their effort, the same impassible mountain always stood before their straining eyes. Coming out of this fancy, he noticed this difference. As they came nearer and the shadows slid out to meet them, a mist of smoke commenced to blot out the clear form of the ranges.

Pat hauled up on the nervous horses and began to curse. "It's those damn long-eared mountaineers," he finally explained to Johnny. "They burn off the woods to clear the ground for hunting. They think they own the top of the world." Slowly the wagon crept in towards the foot of the mountain slope. They came upon half a dozen other wagons drawn up in a field, all of them waiting until the fire burned out.

That night for the first time, Johnny saw an encampment of about fifty people with their wagons drawn up in a circle around one central fire. There were families from Maryland, a wagon load of twenty people of all sorts who came from beyond the Dela-

ware in New Jersey, and one wagon of Connecticut Yankees. Johnny hung around and listened. Sound of the sharp Yankee tongue did his starved ears good, and the sight of so many travellers made him feel he was getting near his journey's end at last. Then too, the lurid glare from the burning mountain increased with darkness and painted the low clouds a dull crimson. Sometimes a puff of night wind rolling down the slope almost choked him with smoke and heat. The sound of distant crackling flames came with the wind, and sometimes the faint crash of a giant tree falling. "The fools, the fools, they ought to know better," was all he could think. It made him feel uneasy.

When a feeble dawn was struggling against the haze of pungent smoke, Johnny heard a slight noise in the road and looking up, he saw a stag followed by three does come lightly out of the forest, and then, sighting the wagons, leap on down the hill with a flash of white scuts. He was glad no one was there to reach for a gun.

Pat came out from under the wagon and licking his forefinger, held it to the breeze. He winked solemnly at Johnny: "She's shifting to the south. We can start up."

More mountain, always more mountain;

Johnny's throat was parched and his eyes were red and stinging from the smoke. They had great trouble to make the horses go ahead. The smell of fire put panic into them. Suddenly, Pat got mad and beat the lead horse over the back and rump with a wagon stave. The horse pulled like a demon into the hot smoke-laden air, more terrified of Pat than of the fire. At noon, after scrambling up a steep shale-covered ascent, the horse stood still, heaved and groaned, then flopped over and lay panting across the road. They couldn't budge the beast. Pat got a sledge from the wagon and knocked it on the head. It took the crew a good hour to unharness and roll the carcass over the roadside and tumble it into a ravine. Pat in this mood of unreasoning cruelty was new to Johnny. Everybody's nerves were on edge. They pushed slowly on always up the mountain, not even stopping for food. No one wanted to get caught in the woods, and nobody knew just where the fire was spreading. The men were drenched in sweat and ashes.

Then at last, a breeze struck down from over the ridge. The wind freshened from the south, and turned the fire back upon its course. They came to a wagon rest called

The Nail Shop on the top of the mountain. Everyone ran for the spring hole near the tavern and washed off their livery of soot, and drank great gulps of the cool mountain water. As he fell asleep, Johnny heard some of the mountain folk talking who had come in at nightfall. "Yon's a right smart blaze," they said. "She's eatin' a terrible parcel of woods." They asked if "you all air goin' on yon or fixin' to settle in the back-country." They spoke of "baiting" the horses, and told Pat, who was now in a less thirsty and pleasanter humor, that he was a gent "of the first chop." Johnny noticed they carried long hunting knives slung between their shoulder blades.

The next morning, the air had cleared, revealing a desolation of smoldering stumps stretching for miles to the north. Looking down the western slope, he could just make out the town of Fort Bedford lying ten miles away between Warrior and Tussey mountains. It was a difficult ten miles winding along the steep and narrow valley of the Juniatta river. It was a wild mountain torrent plunging through dark ravines, lying beneath them like a steel-bright sword flung into the crevasses of the hills. As they came

carefully down the ridges, the loud shouting of the waters increasingly filled their ears. Here was where Forbes's army transport built the road as it went, and a corps of deep-sea sailors let the pack animals and wagons down the mountainside with rope and tackle. "Better luck than Braddock, the poor beast," said Pat, "who travelled his own hard way and then stood up like the fool of a Britisher he was, and let the Injuns shoot into the chest of him."

Three times that day, they crossed the turbulent fords of the Juniatta. "Lucky for us," Pat told Johnny, "the water is at low. Last trip but one, me friend that was, Mike Devlin, come to this bank we stand upon and found forty wagon waiting on the waters to subside. 'What, men,' says he, tipping his bottle, 'and ye call this a river? 'Tis a brook I could leap with one leap if it wasn't for me wagon and all.' And with that, he whipped up his horses and plunged down the bank. 'Mike,' says I, 'behave yourself, you'll be drownded and then where'll you be?' I yelled at him. Did he listen? 'I'll cross over this minute of me life,' says he, and he started and the raging waters sucked him and his beasts and his

wagon rolling down among the rocks. And he was damned to hell. A very headstrong lad," said Pat, and crossed himself at the thought. Then once more: "Ged-ap, ye apes;" and they rolled on towards Bedford where a branch from Nemacolin's Path along the Potomac turned north for Pittsburgh.

Nothing new in Bedford for Johnny except more pioneers, more wagon loads of eager people resting up for the great push over the Alleghany mountains. He saw them at sunset rising up against the sky higher than any earth he had ever looked upon. Range on range reaching up until their topmost edge was made of burning gold.

"Fourteen miles over yonder mountain," said Pat, "and it'll break the back of two good days and ourselves to do it." The dirty wagon, the lean, hard-pushed horses and four tough determined men worked up into the rocky road, carefully along the edges of the deep gorges where mountain torrents flickered beneath the forest. Twice they had to unload the wagon and ease it with rope and tackle over fallen trees and a slip of rock. Then once more after unbelievable delays, the western winds slid over

the crest and struck against their sweating faces.

Everybody paused without a word and stood there under the roof of the sky. Even Pat was silent. Then he stamped the hard ground: "Queen of them all," he said. Johnny thought he could reach up and touch the gentle clouds of evening. He stood upon the roof of the western world at last. Everything after this would be down hill.

Pat and the wagoners made off at dusk for a wagon-house, driving the unharnessed horses for a good bedding and plenty of oats. Johnny stayed behind. He was glad to be alone up here. For a while, he tended the night fire, and then he crawled in over the bales to sleep beneath the canvas top. The night was still and cold. A white frost began to sift down shortly after starlight. Rolled up in blankets, he could gaze past his feet through the half-moon of the wagon end to where the sharp stars winked and crackled in the east. The desolate cry of wolves sounded from a distant valley and close by, a hunting owl hooted along the cliffs. The immense silence of the upper air drank up these small sounds. So still the night, the boy thought he could

hear the thin metallic twiring of the stars above him. He was falling asleep. "God speed you, Johnny Appleseed." He was falling asleep.

One star beyond the shadow of his feet grew bright and big. It grew and grew before the boy's astonished eyes. The whole air lighted up and the singing of voices drew near. The star turned into something else. He looked upon the bright white-petaled cloud of the apple tree in his father's yard. He was a little boy again. His father stood smiling quietly in the doorway of the shop. There were other presences about beneath the tree, within the tree. Out of the shining glory of the tree, a voice spoke, small and clear. "Johnny Appleseed." He looked around but only saw the familiar faces of old Hartwick and his father, and unknown faces of men and women. They all looked at him. "Johnny Appleseed," said the voice, "Planter of the wilderness, Keeper of my orchards." He turned to his father and his father smiled and raised his hand in greeting. The tree grew smaller. He was looking at a star. He rose up on his elbow. His head hit the hood of the wagon. He was awake.

The stars were fading out. It must be morning. He climbed down and tried to warm himself by the embers of the fire. Johnny was too amazed to think, and yet the dream, if this was a dream, seemed most natural and more real to him than the white shape of the wagon or the mountain beneath his feet. He walked a little way to the edge of the cliff, and watched the pearl gray sails of dawn shake out. There was a pause, and then the bright edge of a yellow ball broke the eastern hilltops. "Day throws up her golden ball." He had heard that somewhere.

Mile high above the mountain where Johnny stood, a black speck wheeled in the drift of the western winds. The old eagle from Bald Eagle mountains, perhaps. The bright inhuman eye of the eagle saw many waves of the Alleghanies flattened out beneath his gaze. He saw the rising sun suck up the valley mists into thin air. North and south a hundred miles, the smoky-blue mountains ranged clearly into view. The eagle screamed and slid down another windy level where he could see the dirty scars of roads cutting the forests. He saw a broken but unending succession of white

wagon tops starting to life, creeping westward. He saw little hidden valleys where morning smoke plumed lonely cabins. Men came out into the sunlight with guns, and women tethered the goats and dipped bright buckets at the edge of the creeks.

Goats upon the mountain. The eagle remembered the nest high upon the sun-bright ledges. He slipped down another level of the air. He circled. Johnny, looking up, saw him pause, fold his wide wings and whistle down like a shot and strike. His talons sunk into the flanks of his prey and his great wings labored up again into the high places with a little dangling object growing smaller. The sun-drenched ledge came nearer. Little eaglets fought out to the edge of the nest, they screamed, they clacked their gaping beaks. A shot rang out in the valley beneath where Johnny stood. Someone was hunting.

Pat and the men came back with the horses. "Two more little mountains, and there we are," said Pat. "And did ye sleep easy, me boy, all by yourself?"

"I wasn't by myself," said Johnny. "I saw my father and I spoke with angels and the voice of God told me what to do. I was never so much in company in all my life."

"God save us," Pat crossed himself. "You're the lad for strange dreams."

" 'Twas not a dream," said Johnny with great conviction.

"Let it pass," said Pat. "Suit yourself. Let's eat."

XV

Monongahela Moon

AND now Johnny knew mountains, they were in his back, in his eyes and in his ears, and the upward feel of them tipped his body forward when he hit level ground.

His westward journey was already over in spite of the fact that Laurel Ridge and Chestnut Ridge lay between the wagon and the Ohio River. A voice, call it the voice of God, call it anything you want to, had spoken to Johnny and he knew what to do, and why he had come west to do it. He was going to plant orchards for these people of the wagons. He was going to see to it that their children grew up with apples to eat, with apple blossoms to smell in their own dooryards. The mothers of this new Ohio country were going to have apple blossom shade where their babies could drowse off to sleep with the humming of bees in spring time. It was all very simple now that he knew.

Johnny lost all the feeling of haste which

had pestered his feet most of the way from Springfield. When you're in a hurry, go slow. That was it. When something happens to a man or boy and he gets direction, then all at once a hundred things that before were a hundred things tend to become one thing and fit in as parts of a picture that means something. Suddenly Johnny's picture of the western country took shape. He now realized at last the hungry mouths to feed, the wholesale business of keeping many scattered hungry mouths fed, when the wagon ran into the Cow-Pen men on Laurel ridge.

On the northern branch of the Raystown Path where it shoots off on a parallel road through Fort Ligonier, one afternoon they heard the bellowing of wild cattle in the woods and the distant shouting of men. Cattle in the forests? Johnny looked at Pat. "Cow-Pen men," said Pat grimly, and pulled up the horses listening as the noise grew nearer. "Now mind you, keep your mouths shut, men," said he. "These boys is a tough bunch and they're like to be too many for us. They stole me wagon onct. I hate the sight and the smell of them."

The wagon rested quietly at one side of the road. This was unlike Pat, and lent an

air of excitement to the sound of many cattle crashing just out of sight in the undergrowth beyond the wagon. Then a herd of wild-eyed steers tossing their lean heads, their long curved horns shining in the sun, came quickly into the road and faced about towards the wagon. They were as nimble and quick of foot as the deer of the mountain. They milled around, undecided whether to charge past the wagon or on down the slope. Suddenly with a whoop and waving of big black hats, half a dozen riders on little ponies came between the wagon and the cattle. Some of the men had long ropes coiled at their saddle horns. The leader sent his men chasing the cattle down the road and turning sharply, came up close to where Pat sat aloft on the wagon seat. "You bullwhackers stay where ye be. Hear me. Stay just where ye be unless you want your wagon spilled from here to hell-fire. Git me?"

Pat spat into the road and nodded. He was too mad to speak, but knew enough to obey. The Cow-Pen boss pulled his black hat down over his hard eyes and wheeled away after the others. When he was well out of earshot, Pat spoke his piece about

cattle thieves and Cow-Pen men. Meanwhile the wagoners cooled their heels for an hour while the round-up worked down into the valley. Then they whipped up, and setting the brakes, slid down along their route. A few miles beyond, they passed a large cleared space of almost a hundred acres fenced off with chestnut rails. Inside this, a thousand head of cattle milled and charged, while the Cow-Pen riders cut out the beef critters from the rest of the herd.

"They'll be along the road to-morrow," said Pat, watching them work with an admiration he couldn't conceal. "We'd best keep right on our way."

Johnny was learning something of the west. And again the following day on Chestnut Ridge, as the wagon came down the foothills towards Greensburg, they ran head-on into a flock of two hundred turkeys being driven along towards the town. Men with long cane poles, whistling and clucking, tried to keep their nervous army in hand before the shouting charge of the wagon whipped on by Pat.

Different from the Cow-Pen men. The flock scattered to cover on both sides of the road and the turkey drivers cursed in vain

and flung rocks after the wagon. Some few birds flew along before the team until well away from the rest of the flock. Pat threw Johnny the reins, jumped down with his long whip and wound the snaky lash around a fat gobbler before the boy knew what was happening. Pat wrung the bird's neck with a sweep of his arm, and was back in the seat with a dexterity that tokened practice. When he stopped laughing, he explained: "'Tis the right of the road, lad. Turkeys are trespassers in this man's highway." He held up the bird. "God be praised, 'tis a fat one." He flung it under the seat. That evening in their camp beyond Greensburg, the smell of the roast turkey sent up a thank offering to the god of luck which placed the turkey-drivers so neatly to hand. "'Tis not once in a dozen trips a man can pick up a bird like this," said Pat.

There was added life at Greensburg. Here the Juniatta or Frankstown Path turned south and joined the Raystown Road. More wagons and more pioneers. The hardy crews who had not broken down by the wayside, lay ready to tackle the last lap of road with Pittsburgh only thirty

miles away. That night, Johnny was too interested to sleep at once. It was time to clear the board now for new faces and a new life. His stay with the wagoners was nearly over. The growing moon had been creeping up higher in the east over their wagon during the journey from Harrisburg. She shed a gentle light on the westward sloping hills which fell away to the valley of the Monongahela River. She put a silvery finger on Johnny's head as he leaned against a sycamore tree. Sights and sounds rose dreamily out of the night. Man and his ways of good and his ways of evil seemed neither good nor evil under the moon. What Johnny felt he could not put into words.

Fires glowed faintly under the moonlight from valley camps and cabins. Shouts of drunkenness came up the hill and filtered into something childlike and harmless under the moon. Johnny gazed long and long at the few winking eyes in the darkness. These valleys he had come through had long time seen the glare of Indian camp fires. They had echoed to the war whoop and the crazy yell of Indian frolics after hunting. Now they showed the fires of

wagoners and pioneers pushing out the Indian. They echoed to the shouts of teamsters frolicking at the wagon houses.

"To-morrow I'll be in Pittsburgh," thought Johnny as he strained his eyes towards the northwest looking for a sign. Dreamily he walked back to the wagon in the moonlight. So much for the mountains.

XVI

Pittsburgh

FROM the earliest times the point of land between the Monongahela and the Alleghany Rivers was the most important spot west of the mountains. The Iroquois Indians called this place Shanopin, and had a fortified town there and other towns nearby, Allequippa's Town to the south a few miles, and northward across the Alleghany, the Seneca stronghold of Kuskuskis.

The war paths from the northeast, the Shamokin trail from the far away Susquehanna, the Juniatta Path, and south of this, the famous Nemacolins Path from Virginia, all came to a meeting place where the two rivers joined and made the giant stream which the French had named La Belle Riviere.

The French explorers and the English traders from the north and from the east met at the headwaters of the Ohio in the middle of the eighteenth century, thirty years before the Revolution. It was like

this. The Indians traded beaver for the iron tools of the white man. The beaver built his dams along the creeks of the Ohio. The Frenchman came gliding in his birch canoe with his Indian friends. The white traders, George Croghan, Simon Girty and the like, came walking over the mountains. All of them looked upon the beaver and then at each other, and this was the origin of wars that made bloody history in the Ohio valley for three-quarters of a century.

In the year 1749, Céleron took possession of the Ohio valley in the name of Louis the Fifteenth and dug down into the earth of the river banks at Kanawa Creek and other places, hiding lead plates which claimed the Ohio lands for France. The English wanted the same hunting grounds. They laughed at Céleron's plates. They started to build a fort at the headwaters of the Ohio in 1754. The French under Contrecoeur took this away and named it Fort Duquesne. Braddock and a young colonial George Washington tried to recapture the fort, and everybody knows what happened to Braddock. What some do not know is that he built a good road from Virginia to the Ohio which in the long run more than overshadows his defeat.

General Forbes finally came along building another road through Raystown and took Fort Duquesne away from the French in 1758, and another general named Stanwix built a much stronger fort at a cost of $250,000, and called it Pitt. So much for the beaver. His day was done.

Trader Croghan was around all this time, up and down through the wilderness, and was so successful with the Indians that the Six Nations made him a councillor among their chiefs and deeded him forty thousand acres of land running northeast along the Alleghany from Fort Pitt. Two years later in 1770, the people of the small trading station around Fort Pitt made him President of their Committee of Safety when the Revolution threatened. Croghan's influence in keeping the Indians and whites on relatively friendly terms in dangerous times was vastly important. He had trading posts from the Muskingum to the Mohawk. He married the half-breed daughter of the British Indian Agent, Sir William Johnson, and his own daughter married Joseph Brandt, the famous Mohawk chief. He was one of the great pioneers who made it relatively simple for the next generation of men like Johnny Appleseed to find the

Ohio and carry on to a different but no less important work.

When Johnny happened over the Alleghanies the old lawlessness was spluttering out under the discipline of a central government. People in Philadelphia in 1791 put a tax on whisky. To the frontiersman, this was a deep injury. Whisky passed as ready money in those first days on the river, and so men got angry and took up arms against dictation from a far away authority. A few months after Johnny rolled into Pittsburgh, General Lee with fifteen thousand troops came up from Virginia to put down open revolt. Here was another Shay's Rebellion.

The wild whites were soon under control. The next year, Mad Anthony Wayne marched an army across Ohio to the Maumee River and at the battle of Fallen Timber in August, 1794, defeated the Shawnees and Iroquois so badly that the fighting frontier was pushed westward another five hundred miles and all the northwest opened up to pioneers. Johnny was on the forefront of an increasing flood of settlers.

The year Johnny came west the point of the land between the rivers, which was Pittsburgh, showed the ruin of the two

disputed forts, Duquesne and Pitt. The walls of expensive Fort Pitt were hauled off to make houses and boat-yards by the newcomers, many of whom had never heard the war whoop of an Indian. The great roads over the mountains, originally built for the passage of armies, were now pouring in their covered wagons full of settlers with the tin pots jangling underneath and the cows and pigs tied behind. The clear waters of the Alleghany River, and the muddy flood of the Monongahela were sliding along processions of rafts and scows likewise crowded with families of pioneers, all children of hope seeking by hard ways to find a new life westward of the mountains.

The spearhead of westward-thrusting civilization was this jumping-off place of Pittsburgh with the river winding one thousand miles ahead to point the way. Beside the garrison at Fort Fayette on the banks of the Alleghany, about forty houses made up the town when Johnny came rolling down the Greensburg road past the fort, past the King's orchards and almost to the tip of the land. Pat turned the wagon sharp left and came to a halt at the tavern of the negro Richards on Ferry Street.

Looking down the slope, Johnny saw the slick running waters of the Monongahela and some boat houses and beyond, rugged hillsides black with coal.

When the wagon came to a halt, he was reluctant to get down from the seat. He stood in the road and felt lost, as if the world had suddenly stopped rolling in its course—journey's end at last, all the miles accomplished, everything done.

The mood was short-lived in a place where everybody was so full of business, and everybody's affairs had a westward motion. He found it easy to apply the pioneer wisdom "Never look back over your shoulder." And easy to bid Pat a casual farewell.

He found lodging at the house of a Madame Grenadier, a hearty, worldly-wise woman well past middle age, who had long lived in the settlement and could remember back before the Revolution. He was safe enough under her roof when the mob of John Holcroft, called Tom the Tinker, took over the town during the Whisky Rebellion and burned the house of General Neville just down at the foot of the street by the river. When things settled, he got work at the shipyards building rafts and river

scows. Old-timers told him of the first days of the trade when the Dutchman Jacob Yoder in '82 built his boat and nailed the horns of a longhorn steer to the bow and pushed off for the Mississippi. While he drank in the turbulent air of this strange western life, he learned more and more of the nature of his job, if he were ever to minister to these rugged free-living folk. He decided ten years of Pittsburgh life was worth a hundred on the Connecticut. When he looked back upon his boyhood home, it was as if he had left there years before, yet it was only five months. But those five months counted the difference between boy and man.

Now from the very first days his ears got used to a new rhythm and a new music, the rhythm of rolling wagons and the music of the Monongahela where day in, day out, the mallets and hammers of the shipwrights floated up over the waters.

Johnny was to live in Pittsburgh twelve years, from 1794 to 1806. He grew to feel that the place was like the stem of an hour-glass, where he could watch the stream of people trickling over the narrow mountain roads from the coastal plain of the seaboard, through this stem and on to be lost

in the forested plains of the Ohio country. He became a westerner. He felt time rolling by at a pace, and great things preparing.

And here it is that Jonathan Chapman ceased to exist, and a new man with strange far-away ideas in his head came to life, a man people called Johnny Appleseed. Not quickly, by no stroke of lightning! Johnny Appleseed had been forming a long time in the shell of young Chapman. In histories, we turn over a page and the man we are watching from a private becomes a captain, another few pages and he is a general and praised by all men. At the end of the chapter, he is dead and another name begins and another sentence reads: "When a young man, he enlisted as a private but soon became captain," and so on to the same end.

So from a hundred years away, it might seem about Johnny. For twelve years Pittsburgh swallowed him up, but Johnny also swallowed Pittsburgh and all the meaning of life it could teach him. He worked in the shipyards along the Monongahela. When he wanted to think, he worked with his hands at some task he loved, and by-and-by, the idea he wanted came uncalled for out of the thin air and he knew what he wanted.

He couldn't get enough of the sounds and sights of his new home place. He loved the whine of the saws, the glancing chunk of the broad-ax squaring off timbers and the gentle hissing noise of the plane under his hand turning up long fragrant shavings from the pine planks. And more than all these, the talking of the river waters along the banks, conversations from the mountainy places. He knew in his heart some day he would slide out upon this current and go on and down into the greater wilderness. Meanwhile, he worked and saved his wages as he could.

His first winter and spring was a busy time. Barges had to be hurried along to carry supplies to Wayne's army up the Sciota. There was a perpetual ringing of bugles from the fort where soldiers were drilling. Men were determined a free way into the northern country must be cleared for white settlers. No longer were they satisfied to look longingly from the Kentucky shores at the Indian country. Formerly there were places called Shawnee Town starting on the Susquehanna. Now they were in Ohio. Men wanted more west yet to the Shawnee towns.

When spring came, and it came earlier

here than back in New England, Johnny saw the barges push off on the freshet and he himself turned for awhile into the hills. Back of the town, there was a grassy rise of ground called Grant's Hill. There was a clear spring here not oily nor full of sulphur like most of the springs in the neighborhood. Johnny fancied the place because he was never used to the local habit of drinking the muddy river waters.

Pittsburgh was strange. Coal cropped out of the hillsides all about. He had never seen coal in his life, and here anybody with a bushel basket could go out and hack himself a load paying a penny to the landowner. If he was lazy, he could buy it for three cents a bushel in the town. In some places the hillsides were greasy with a flow of dark oil. This was the very substance the peddler at Kingston had tried to sell him, calling it Seneca Indian oil. The Indians used it for rubbing sore muscles. To the credit of the mountains, he could scoop up with his two hands all the Indian Oil he needed.

Then the apple orchards came into bloom. Johnny could walk along the Alleghany through the overgrown trees of the King's Orchard or get work helping to

tend the better kept trees belonging to General O'Hara. This farm was not far from where Braddock's road came in along the Monongahela by Sukes run. Johnny still harbored the idea of an orchard for himself with plenty of good seed for the people who could take it on into new places. But he had to wait. He must save his money.

In order to spend little, he put into practice the lessons he had learned as a boy from the Agawam Indians. For his clothes, he got a buckskin and building a fire of hickory bark, he made a funnel of the skin above the fire, smudged the fire with punk wood and let the smoke suck up through the skin until it was cured and ready for working into leggins and a shirt. When he ate, he took cheap corn meal, mixed it with salt and water and baked it in the ashes of the hearth. This, plus boiled turnips, fish from the rivers, and apples fresh or dried, kept him in health. The idea grew in him that he must not eat flesh of any kind. It became to him a violation of the spirit of life. He was getting a dollar a day when he worked in the shipyard. He saved most of it, and a dollar in those days was worth a good deal more than now.

Johnny's trip over the mountains with Pat had taught him one thing. If he was going to serve his fellow men, he must first learn to understand them, all of them. His spare time he spent loafing around taverns and talking with the wagon people. In those years between 1794 and 1800, every sort of man, first or last, seemed to come through Pittsburgh.

One Sunday in the yard of Morrow's Green Tree Tavern down by the wharves, he stopped and listened while a great blond man preached to the Catholic wagoners. Johnny took pains to meet this man. There was something in his face. It was one of those faces every man meets once or twice in life and thinks, "If I could know what that man knows, life would be entirely simple." This priest's name was Father Augustine Smith. He said nothing special to Johnny yet he filled him with elation about life. A long time afterward Johnny found out that this man was a Russian prince whose real name was Galatzin. He found out that he had come to this country with a fortune of $150,000, and spent it all buying up tracts of land in the Alleghany country for Catholic settlers.

And again he got to know Mike Fink,

MEET RED MIKE FINK

king of the barge men. When Mike spat out the dark red tobacco juice and glanced at a man, that man either made tracks for the tall timber or put up his fists with a sinking heart and prepared for the worst. Now the reason these two men, Johnny and Mike, got on was largely due to curiosity. "Crack my lice," said Mike, "what sort of a critter are you, Johnny Appleseed, who won't eat good red meat, nor drink good red whisky, nor tote a gun or fight for the love of it?" And when another river-rat, called Billy-the-Earthquake, told Johnny he had better "shut his mouth or he'd get his teeth sunburnt," Mike was ready to gouge his eyes out just to show Johnny how it could best be done. Mike was called The Snapping Turtle of the Ohio, and boasted he could "out-chaw, out-fight, out-swim and out-run any galoot on the river." Men preferred to believe him.

Here was the original Alligator-Horse which Johnny's host on that first night out from Springfield had been so afraid of. From Mike, Johnny learned that nothing actual, and face to face, is half as bad as the mind can paint it. He discovered that he could get on decently with all kinds and

conditions of men because he asked nothing from them nor held anything back. His natural kindness didn't go stale, because he never questioned a man's right to set his own standard of conduct. Johnny never disputed and never tried to change anybody's way of life. This got him his own freedom in dangerous places and led people to trust him.

In the year 1798, Johnny got a parcel of land with a dozen apple trees on it, in trade for helping the owner build a flatboat for a down river trip into Kentucky. He went to Madame Grenadier who had been keeping his money for him, and counted it over. It came to over one hundred dollars. Time to build at last. His land lay at the foot of Grant's hill overlooking Hogg's pond. In the fall, he dug his cellar hole and lined it with stone and laid out a line of stone thirty-by-twenty, one foot above ground to hold the sills of his house free of the ground lest they rot. That winter, he felled trees back in the forest lands, and squared off oak sills and chestnut plates for the sides and rafters. He hired a man and whipsawed chestnut slabs for siding and roof boards. He spent part of his money for

cedar splits to shingle the outside. By February, he was ready for an ox-team to haul in his timbers.

Then he bought a keg of whisky, a barrel of cider and had Madame Grenadier come out with her maid laden with doughnuts and cake. The neighbors came over for a house raising. He didn't take any stock in whisky himself, but there was only one way his neighbors knew of "raising" and their help he had to have.

The long hard oak sills were laid and the mortise and tenons fitted and spiked with wooden pegs. Then with block and tackle from the shipyard, the men laid hold of the side beams with the plates all fixed and raised up each side of the house-frame in turn. The cross beams were swung into place and two men hoisted aloft to peg them into position. When the ridge pole was fixed and the rafters laid, the job was done. All in a day's time, thanks to his gang of helpers. Johnny climbed up to the very top and nailed an apple bough to the ridge for a rooftree. All that evening there was a riotous time in the skeleton of the new house.

The rest of the spring was given over to the slow work of laying a chimney up the

back of the long thirty-foot room and putting on the side boards of chestnut. For this he got a keg of hand-wrought nails from the smithy, which sunk into the hard grain of the frame and curled about so that no mortal hand would ever easily dislodge them. When the house was shingled with the cedar splits, it looked to Johnny like a pretty neat contraption. Real glass in the windows and a big star-shaped iron latch on the front door. No locks were fitted. It wasn't his idea of a house to have them. When the first blue smoke curled aloft from the chimney, Johnny felt a great swelling of heart. He had never imagined himself as a householder before. Now it seemed good to him.

Beside his six-foot fireplace, Johnny lodged a square of hard maple for a hominy block. Up in the loft he had an opening for a smoke chamber in the chimney, and hooks for hanging bacon and hams. He had no intention of inflicting his own meatless diet on tired guests.

Now that his house was done, Johnny was broke. What did he care? He had shelter for the shelterless, an orchard and a garden patch. He imagined himself living forever under this sturdy roof. He was

twenty-five years old that summer, and the new century had begun. He was ready to open up as a supply station and rest home for way-worn travellers going on further west. Slowly people when they came into Pittsburgh heard about Johnny's place. They heard men tell of a man who dressed in cast-off clothing, who kept bees and tended an orchard and whose door was always open to a stranger in want. One by one, the curious and the needy found their way to his door. His reputation spread back to the way-stations along the mountain roads, and put heart in the overburdened father or the mother with a sick child. They came along the road from Greensburg and turned down Grant Street towards the Monongahela and the house of Johnny Appleseed. Anybody they asked seemed to know and point the way.

At first Johnny Appleseed was so busy with his new work that he had little time or energy for thoughts beyond his daily tasks. He was up at the crack of dawn and flopped into a dead sleep at sundown. There were fussy chores, what with his cow and his plowing and his trees and beehives. In the fall when he sold his apples at the cider mill, he brought back a barrel

of good seed, which he sorted and dried, and tied in little buckskin bags to pass on to the wagon-folk. Sometimes he gave away honey as well. He would give away anything that a man needed and take in exchange old clothes which saved him the need of buying any for himself. His dress began to look a little queer, but this didn't bother him. Any old thing was good enough to cover his nakedness.

Then a strange thing happened which once more turned his mind westward. One summer day a wagon drove into his yard, and coming down to greet the newcomers, Johnny saw a familiar figure. It was the woman Sal, with a young baby in her arms. A lanky Irishman stood behind holding the horses. There were tears in Sal's eyes.

"I knew I'd find ye, Johnny," she cried. She nodded towards the man. "I'm with him now. The other never came back. Look at the baby. Aint she a pretty one?"

All the sad memories of the cabin beyond Wyalusing flooded back to Johnny, but he said nothing. Here was Sal fully herself again and going on to new lands and a new life. People like that came by every day. People who could pick up after hardship. People who had learned never to look back.

Johnny put them up for the night, gave Sal a jar of honey and some seedlings for an orchard. The next day they went on over towards Kentucky on the Wheeling road. Perhaps they might meet again. Nothing would surprise Johnny any more.

Years went by, pleasant years, and Johnny became an institution in the pioneer parade. Pittsburgh kept on growing. Its houses crept out along new streets almost to Johnny's dooryard. Johnny grew restless. His house and orchard, and his reputation for loving-kindness perhaps meant too much to him. He felt life getting a little mite too easy. One day he dropped his work and climbing to the top of Grant's Hill, sat down and looked over the town.

What lay at his feet was no longer the little pioneer way station of the days when he first arrived. Then along the half dozen streets a man could look into the eyes of the people and say "the cowards never started and the weak died by the way." But no longer. Commerce and the parasites of commerce were taking over the town.

The year was 1805. Johnny was thirty years old. Five years before, the first sailing vessel, "The Game Chicken," had lurched down the ways into the Monon-

gahela. She had carried a cargo of flour clear around to Philadelphia. Two years ago a colony of Swiss peasants under the leadership of John Dufour had come through and gone on down river five hundred miles to Big Bone Creek, where they set up a village called Vevay and planted vineyards. Pittsburgh was fast getting to be back country. The firm of Tarascon and Berthoud was building bigger sailing ships every year. "The Monongahela Farmer" of 250 tons burthen sold Pennsylvania linen and flour to the Italians of Trieste and Messina. There were glass works costing $30,000. Rich merchants and English travellers were coming on from Philadelphia by stagecoach at thirty dollars a trip. Eastern civilization had sneaked over the Alleghanies and caught up with Johnny Appleseed. Time to move on before he too became a burgher. Suddenly the worth of his possessions became nothing to him. Johnny wanted to get away into the wilderness, wanted to catch up with the cutting edge of the frontier, to follow after his own people and renew his sense of hardship.

"Come spring, I shall go," said Johnny to himself, and went down to the house, his ears once more alive to the call of the river.

XVII

The Picawillamy Trail

IT IS hard for a man with sinewy legs, whose eyes by habit turn to horizons beyond the farthest hill, to do what civilization asks of its children—settle down.

Days came to Johnny when the western winds brought the odor of leafy forests and the dry scent of grassy plains. He felt the warm hand of the sun upon his bent neck and as he looked up, the bright yellow ball rolling along drew his thoughts to the far skyline. He stares and stares. He looks down upon the dun earth to rest his eyes. The shadow of a bird slides over the grass beyond his feet. He looks up and sees steady, knowing wings bearing the bird away on important business. The bird becomes a speck and winks out in distance. Where is that bird?

One day in June of 1806, a shadow came over the sun at noontime. Stealthy twilight shook down upon the forests, the hills shrank, the birds stopped singing, and the

axes and hammers of the wilderness people were quiet. When the hot yellow rays beat down again upon the upturned face of Johnny Appleseed, they seemed to penetrate to his heart's core. A second period of westward seeking had come upon him.

For twelve long years wagons had rolled by his doorway. Flatboats and "broadhorns" pushing out upon the forever-running waters of the Ohio had been saying good-by and good-by, while he kept his home open to a wandering people, to the horizon-seekers.

At last his own time had come.

Johnny made a steady sort of craft by lashing two dugouts side by side. He picked over his best apple seed and putting it into deerskin bags, stowed these in his boat. He gave his house, his orchard and his garden patch to a widow with three children. He took a negro boy named Sam as a helper. Sam had been hiding from the slave-hunters in Johnny's cellar hole. These two dug their paddles into the gravelly bank and slid out upon the Monongahela. Their hearts leapt to feel the river-waters grip their craft and gently swing them into midstream.

Johnny Appleseed knew exactly where

he was going. He had been making experimental trips through the Ohio wilderness in summer time, visiting the lonely homes of people who were struggling to raise the orchards he had started for them. Each summer he learned of apple trees springing from the rich Ohio soil further west than he had previously known. Once he had stumbled upon a natural bit of prairie deep in the forest toward Lake Erie, on the old Conchake trail from Pittsburgh to Sandusky. The place was called the Black Forks. Twice he had taken that route with apple seedlings on his back in a fagoty bundle. There was where he was going now to bring up a new orchard closer to the edge of the frontier.

He might have gone overland from Logstown, where the Conchake trail left the Big Beaver twenty-eight miles from Pittsburgh, to the Little Beaver creek, sixteen miles farther on, then eighty miles due west to Tuscarawas Town near Yellow creek where the right-hand path led on seventy-seven more hard miles to the headwaters of the Muskingum, five miles more by the left fork of the trail to the abandoned site of Black Tom's town, and then by the Mohican to

the Black Forks and the brush-covered orchards.

Instead, Johnny was going down river to the mouth of the Muskingum and thence to Marietta upriver to his place. He wanted to drift along the watery road so many of his people had taken before him. Even though it was June there was still high water on the Ohio. His canoe slid along at four miles an hour. In the still reaches, Johnny and Sam bent to their paddles. The forested hills drifted by, the banks of the river began to open out into narrow strips of rich bottom land.

The first night they passed Logstown. From there the river turned west and southwest. Logstown was the river end of the old Iroquois war path starting way back at Tioga on the Susquehanna. Johnny would have liked to hike back along those wilderness miles to see if his friend Abeel was still alive. But he had other work to do. Abeel's people long ago had built their western forts near Logstown and called them Shenango, and Shengis Old Town, and White Mingo's Castle. They were all gone now under the feet of the white men.

In four days' time, Johnny saw three

lovely islands which marked the approach to Marietta and the Muskingum. Just beyond, he saw the stockade of Fort Harmer, and the even streets of Marietta laid out upon a gentle slope. It was like coming to a New England village as he and Sam pulled their craft up on the beach beside the town. The meeting house, the picket fences, the crisp talk of Massachusetts raised old memories. He was glad he had come this way.

When he came up the main street with the bag of apple seed upon his shoulder, it surprised him to see what a settled place this was—no longer a border fortress thrust into the Indian country.

In 1790 scarcely more than three thousand whites were settled in Ohio. The morning Johnny walked up the peaceful street of Marietta in 1806, upwards of fifty thousand white settlers lived on cleared homesteads in this one-time Indian country. This is what Manassah Cutler's ox-team pioneers had helped to do. Johnny remembered these people passing his father's house in Springfield when he was a boy of twelve.

Suddenly he came upon a dooryard with a young apple tree in new leaf shading the

path. He took the tree as a sign and walked through that gate. Dumping his bags of seed beneath the tree, he rapped on the door. The owner came out, saying: "I am Dr. True."

"I am Johnny Appleseed and this is Sam," replied Johnny.

"Good man," the doctor exclaimed. "I know all about you. Come in."

Johnny stayed three days with the doctor, while Commander Whipple of Fort Harmer turned out his entire garrison to plow up orchard land for Johnny to plant. Whipple was the famous privateer captain who had captured the Gaspée in the early days of the Revolution. He had come west with Israel Putnam in '88.

After planting this orchard for the New Englanders, Johnny pushed on up the Muskingum, up the White Woman River to his depot at the Black Forks. He found his young trees safe and his lean-to in good repair. He bought a mule from a near-by settler, and this mule Solomon, and Sam and himself tended orchard all that first summer. The mule and Sam plowed and toted lumber. Johnny felled trees to make himself a log house for the coming of winter. The mule worked well for these two,

but when it came to strangers, Sam explained, "Ef you beat de critter, he jes' sot an' ugly. Ef you scratch him behin' de ear and say, 'So thar, Solomon, so thar,' aint nothin' he won't do fo' you."

December came along, and the orchard trees were covered with protecting brush, and the frost had chilled them down to withstand the winter. Johnny said good-by to the Black Forks and set out along the Sandusky trail to look over the western borders of his new territory. He intended to scout along the shore of Lake Erie to the Maumee, go southward down the Pickawillamy, or second wilderness trail, to the headwaters of the Big Miami, thence east to Upper Chillicothe at the forks of the Sciota and down through the unbroken wilderness to Marietta, then up the Muskingum once more—a full circle of about four hundred wilderness miles.

But the winter of 1807 set in early and was bitter cold. Sometimes at night, Johnny's only shelter was a nest of leaves in a hollow sycamore. Staring out, he saw the frozen light of a small silver moon glinting over the crust of snow. Trees snapped in the zero air and the ponds boomed with cracking ice. Johnny was

alone with the gods of nature. The Northern Lights swept up from Hudson Bay and dimmed the stars and moon with their stabbing searchlights. Bands of greenish fire wavered from north to south, and tents of foggy light settled around the tiny human figure standing there alone in the iron forest. At these moments Johnny was awestruck, spellbound, reading the voice of God in letters of fire across the sky. He saw the fiery robes of angels dancing. He strained to catch the music of light. The solid earth beneath his feet fell away.

Other times that winter the red men took him into their smoky, flea-infested wigwams and gave him hot soup made from hickory nuts and bear fat, for his name was known and respected among the tribes. He was a sacred person, a prophet of the Book of the Creature. He was not like other white men. He gave the red men apple trees. He nursed their sick children. He could talk to them freely of the great spirit whose voice came out of the thunder or the infinite silence of snow.

All that early winter of 1807, he was gone from the ways of the frontier people. Once or twice men who had made their clearings beyond the line of safety saw him

come out of the black forest to their doorways. He was gaunt and ragged, half-starved and entirely unarmed. All he asked was a night of rest by the hearthside and in the morning he was off again. He read stories from the Bible to the children of these lonely cabins and told them how the voice of God led him through the wilderness without the help of compass or firearms. His name came to be a marvel to the frontier folk who lived balanced between life and death.

One night late in February, Dr. True heard stumbling footfalls crunching the brittle snow of his dooryard at Marietta. He opened. A staring, frosty-bearded stranger stood clutching the door frame. His eyes were fever-bright. He was mumbling of the angels of the Northern Lights. He had a tin cook-pot on his head for a hat and his only garment was a potato sack. This was Johnny Appleseed whom the winter wilderness had almost conquered. The doctor took him in and slowly nursed him back to health.

Johnny waited out the cold weather at Marietta. When he grew strong, he found plenty to do helping Mary Lake, the nurse. Cholera, influenza, milk-sick and the

swamp-shakes took heavy toll of the little community. But in the spring he was away again up river to the Black Forks.

Sam and Solomon were not there. Whether they had thought him lost and walked off together, or whether unscrupulous passers-by had taken them by force, he never found out.

From the return to Black Forks on, Johnny became more and more a lone man of the woods. Settlers from Muskingum to the far-away Wabash came to expect his solitary figure spring and fall. "Johnny Appleseed did this," "Appleseed Johnny said that." A legend grew up around his name. He lived in strange ways and gradually forgot the life of ordinary men. He was like a wild creature for endurance. He knew the secrets of the forest as did the bright-eyed, slippery-handed raccoon. Through isolation he grew as familiar with creatures of his imagination as with people of his earthly adventuring.

Someone had given him a book by Emmanuel Swedenborg. Here was a kindred spirit. Here was another man who found it difficult to distinguish between men and angels. What he saw and heard he believed. He saw and heard more than most

men. He heard a voice which promised him peace and everlasting joy in heaven. He knew that a bright and lovely bride awaited him hereafter. With a dream he satisfied his lonely days and nights.

Things happened to him and tales spread swiftly on the wings of frontier gossip. Walking barefoot in the summer woods, he was struck in the leg by a rattlesnake. Johnny cut the wound. He built a small fire from which he picked a red-hot coal and held it against the wound until his flesh smoked. He felt no pain. He could cast pain out of his mind. When an Indian friend who was with him killed the snake, Johnny rebuked him. What did the snake know of good or evil? It was snake nature to strike. Better to have let it live.

Johnny took the quaint notion that stinking mayweed and dog fennell planted in the neighborhood of cabins would keep out the poison of malaria. So besides planting the wilderness with apples, he was responsible for scattering this pest of weeds far and wide. Mixed with hardship came many soft days when Johnny drank in the warmth of the sun and renewed the springs of his life. Often in March and October when a wavering wedge of migrating geese flew

over his head, he listened to their honking talk of Canada or the Gulf of Mexico. Walking by the banks of the Ohio in summer, he saw the shy sand-hill crane dancing his awkward steps. Once or twice he came upon white argosies of the wild swan settling upon the waters of a creek. He listened to their hard gabbling. He watched with delight the proud bending of their necks or their arched wings which took the breeze as they swam with their webbed orange feet glinting beneath the water-crust.

Parrakeets still came over from the Kentucky woods in noisy flocks shining red and green in the sunlight. Wood pigeons darkened the midday sky in their million-winged flight. Trees bent and snapped from the weight of their numbers, and the white dung, inches thick, made a waste land of the forest around their roosting places.

Pushing through the dense jungle of the canebrakes along the river bottom, Johnny learned the secret hiding places of little animals and once came upon a catamount face to face. But each went his way. Animals seemed to sense at once that here was a creature they need not fear.

In the year 1810, or it may have been '11,

Johnny made a long exploring trip to the headwaters of the Mississippi looking for new lands for his orchards. The far horizon of the prairies drew and held him; the sweep of miles on miles of flat country with the dark rippling herds of buffalo in the distance sending up a pillar of dust. He found places on the low hills where the bulls had ripped up the turf with their horns and made great dust-wallows to roll in. He found buffalo roads broken through the forests wide enough to drive a wagon. Coming back to the Ohio, he remembered the empty spaces of this more western land. He marked it as a spot to go to some of these days.

Then the war of 1812 broke into the peaceful pursuits of Johnny and the homestead people. Every cabin along the frontier lived in dread of the war cry. The Indians were raiding again. Johnny's head was bowed. He walked freely between the reds and the whites trying for peace but he could do nothing.

It is recorded that Johnny hearing of a threatened Indian attack, ran sixty miles through the wilderness in six hours and saved Fort Mansfield from surprise and massacre. He himself never took to the

safety of the fortified towns. His scalp alone of all the whites was not desired by the red men.

This was the last great border bloodletting. When it was over, the country from the Ohio to the Mississippi was wide open to the pent-up flood of eastern settlers. Families set out from the Atlantic seaboard, from Georgia and Kentucky. In 1816, Tom Lincoln moved from Knob Creek over into Indiana with his wife and seven-year-old boy Abe. And all along the Ohio as far as the Mississippi a man named Audubon was hunting and sketching. Farmers came over the mountains, and with them came the crow, and song birds, and the possum, and the woodchuck.

Johnny watched his young orchards mature and bear good fruit. He became as well known to the flood of newcomers as to the first settlers. He was a native symbol of the Ohio country like the Buckeye. All men knew of him, and little children leapt with delight when he came into their door-yard. Here was a visitor who would tell them marvelous stories of the wilderness.

Yet, once again, for the third time in his life, a great uneasiness was growing in Johnny Appleseed. His people here had

safety and the means of looking out for themselves. Life in Ohio presented no great hardships now. The black bear no longer came near the cabins leaving his deep claw marks on the orchard trees; nor was the howling of wolves heard in the dark of the night.

Year by year the Ohio country had filled up. Neat clap-boarded houses, and farms with many plowed acres, replaced old cabins and stumpy clearings. By 1830, over half a million people lived in Ohio state. From the banks of the river at Sciota or the mouth of the Muskingum, Johnny could watch steamboats pushing steadily up against the flood. There was even a show-boat on the river, run by a man named William Chapman; and stagecoaches rolled over the turnpikes from Pittsburgh with merchants and elegant travellers.

Time to go on. Time to seek the thin edge of the frontier once more.

In 1836, Johnny decided that Ohio was one of his grown-up children. He was sixty-one years old, but still strong, still ready. He remembered the prairies along the great Mississippi with their rolling waves of buffalo, and the empty places yet

to be settled by people in need of his help. He packed his seed bags in a small flatboat, jammed his sweep into the banks of the river by Marietta and pushed off downstream for far-away.

XVIII

Down the O-hi-o

JOHNNY APPLESEED was sixty-one —old for a pioneer. Yet, now as always, he felt fresh and young for a new adventure. He was curious still about distant places.

He pushed off from the wharf at Marietta. Nobody paid much attention. He was always coming and going like the shifting seasons. Lean, sunken-eyed and hawk-like, he sat in the stern of his dugout and let the great Ohio take him away. This picking up and leaving old familiar grounds was nothing new for Johnny. Neither day nor night, season nor weather, made any impression upon him now. He had outlived the need of caring what went on outside. He harbored the world in the cavern of his skull. The weather of his soul was always favorable for new enterprises. And he had three bags of good apple seed, one

of his favorite Rambo, one American Pippin, and the other Golden Russet.

The lazy miles slid under the bow of his dugout. The summer waters were in no hurry. Neither was Johnny. He dropped the Muskingum and drifted on by the island place of Blennerhasset below the Little Kanawa. He remembered when the Englishman and his lovely bride came through Pittsburgh back in '98. People told him of the great Manor House and the rich life of this Eden in the wilderness. In 1805, Aaron Burr had come down river and persuaded Blennerhasset to join his fortunes in the ill-fated Louisiana revolt. And two short years later river pirates had sacked the deserted manor. Now, as Johnny drifted by, nothing showed but two lone chimneys sticking through the undergrowth.

Who were Aaron Burr and Blennerhasset? Names like the names Mike Fink or Billy the Earthquake or Father Smith or Johnny Appleseed. Say 'Ohio' thought Johnny, and you say more than all.

Ohio, *La Belle Riviere*, the name which had so long ago lifted him over the Berkshire Hills! Now at last he knew every fair mile of this forever-flowing water. He knew

the Alleghany and the Monongahela. There were calluses on his hands from the making of the 'broadhorn' scow, year by year taking the flood. He had seen the first treadmill boat, 'The Flying Dutchman,' when she set out for New Orleans. He had seen the first sailing vesel drop down on her two-thousand-mile journey to the Gulf of Mexico, filling her Atlantic sails with the winds of the Alleghanies. He had seen the first steamer 'The New Orleans' of Nicholas Roosevelt take the waters in 1811. And now in 1836 he himself drifted along in the midst of all kinds of river craft.

He thought of his own life as a kind or river—rising like a spring in the mountains, with floods and drouths, but always like a river coursing on and on. Changing too, like the river banks was the body through which his spirit flowed. Once Jonathan Chapman, now Johnny Appleseed, and tomorrow some other form would hold him. His mind leaped beyond the fear of death and dwelt with curiosity and pleasure upon the prospects of Swedenborg's society of angels. Death to Johnny was only an obstruction in the river, an interruption to be borne.

First nightfall of his journey he came to Letart's Falls and made his camp on the Kentucky shore where the canebrakes rose thirty feet high along the banks. Here an earlier day had seen the hunch-shouldered lines of buffalo fording the waters, shaking bright drops from their shaggy backs.

The morning of his second day, he passed the mouth of the Big Kanawa where Céleron had carefully buried one of his leaden plates, claiming these lands for France. This was the spot where just before the Revolution, men back on the Atlantic seaboard had mapped out the Province of Vandalia, now fifty years forgotten. Johnny wondered if he would be forgotten like these other dreaming men and lost settlements; or would his trees far and wide jet up like fountains of memory? What did it matter? The orchards had taken everlasting root.

The long easy summer days ticked off. He came to Limestone Creek below the Sciota and knew he was over four hundred miles from Pittsburgh. Once the hunters from Kentucky used to visit to the Blue Lick sulphur springs when the elk and buffalo came there for salt. Now trains of white-topped wagons rolled down to the

river and waited for barges to ferry them across to new settlements. Johnny thought he would never lose this oncoming horde of wagons. Cincinnati at the mouth of the Little Miami looked like another Pittsburgh.

He took up his paddle and hurried his craft along. He passed the mouth of Big Bone Creek on the Kentucky shore where hunters had found mammoth bones in the swamp, and used them for tent poles. He passed under the hills and saw the vineyards of Vevay terraced along the sun-drenched slopes. He came to the Great Falls at Louisville and camped at Corn Island. The smell of raw whisky from the distilleries hurried him on from that spot. Here was another Pittsburgh six hundred miles down river. He began to think the slow current would never float him free into the less peopled lowlands called Egypt, where each year the flood crept over the country and dropped the silt of Pennsylvania forests on these malarial plains.

Another week and he passed the mouth of the sluggish Wabash. He was getting away at last. Crews poling their scows along the river put fresh vigor into their singing. Their voices came over the water to Johnny:

"Row, boys, row
Down the river row,
All the way to Shawneetown
Long time ago."

"Row, boys, row
Down the O-hi-o
Gals down to Shawneetown
Rarin' for to go."

"Hard upon the beach oar
She moves too slow,
All the way to Shawneetown
Long time ago."

He passed Shawneetown at dusk and kept on going. The racket of the place spread out upon the river drawing in some men and sending others, like Johnny, a little bit further along. Here, about eight hundred and forty miles from the Monongahela, the river men stopped for liquor. It was a famous place—and a wild place; the playground of men like Mike Fink and Billy-the Earthquake.

Next day, Johnny drifted by the black head of Hurricane Island, passed Half-Moon bar, and looked upon that evil place with indifference. Nothing of his would tempt river pirates. Only the earth wanted his kind of riches. On his right hand, he saw

the black entrance to Cave-in-Rock and could still make out the sign painted across the cliff "Wilson's Liquor Vault and House of Entertainment." He knew he was reading the epitaph of more than sixty river men whose bones were found in a deep cave back of the main room. The entrance gaped two hundred feet wide and forty feet high. When the early settlers went by that gap, they barricaded their boats and stood by with loaded guns.

The day after passing this spot of evil memory, Johnny beached his dugout on the Illinois shore at a little river settlement. He traded his boat for a horse and loading on his apple seed, took the road west. For two days he walked over lonely plains with far-scattered settlements. Herds of wild cattle wheeled and made off across the grass. Here again was the loneliness Johnny had been seeking. Yet on his third day of travel, he passed a wagon train headed for the Mississippi. The edge of the frontier was moving too fast for him to catch it. It was moving straight for the Pacific Ocean.

For two busy years, Johnny planted seed and taught men how to raise orchards on the

plains. He helped them build fences against the inroads of wild cattle. Then suddenly Johnny realized his days were numbered. He dropped everything and started back across country for his beloved Ohio, to say good-by to his orchards and the generation he had helped. He felt now a need for familiar faces. He wanted to read the Bible by the fireside of his beloved friends. It was the summer of 1838.

In the two short years he had been gone, many settlers had flooded into the land of Ohio. Like the river silt, new settlers came drifting along each year on the water or over the many turnpikes. Johnny Appleseed walked in the towns searching hungrily for the familiar light of recognition in the eyes of passers-by. The whole nation seemed to have shifted ground. For the first time in his life he felt a little forlorn.

Now he carried a Bible with him instead of apple seed. He got the habit of tearing out a leaf and giving it to the people he visited. Everywhere about him, he saw flourishing orchards—a token that his work was done. Little children who once came to his knee for stories in log cabins at candle-

lighting, now brought him into their clapboarded farm houses and called their own children to meet him.

The new generation gazed at Johnny in awe. Their mothers had told them about an old man of the woods, a modern St. Francis. When they saw this tangle-bearded withered man coming in at their gate, it made them feel strange and uneasy.

Johnny found the sad fate of a man touched by God beyond the common run of men. He felt the isolation of too many years. He was a ghost while he still lived. He turned back towards the Mississippi. At least on those far-away plains he was real and not a legend. He walked alone through the days and nights of autumn and no longer cared to look about him for old friends.

One night, Johnny was attracted to a great camp fire in the forests of Indiana. He saw wagons drawn up all around and a group of settlers listening to a wilderness preacher. Johnny quietly joined the circle and squatted down. The wild-eyed ranter, fortified with rum and emotion, was prophesying hell fire for those lonely men and women. "Show me anywhere among you," he shouted, "a primitive Christian."

Johnny Appleseed stood up. The firelight touched the life-bitten beauty of his face. "Here am I, Johnny Appleseed. I feed the hungry. I clothe the naked. I wear cast-off garments. I have walked ten thousand miles through this wilderness. I give my people deeds, not words. God has called neither you nor me to sit in judgment."

And when the bewildered people turned their backs on the man of hell fire and looked for this stranger, Johnny was off again in the darkness headed west towards his home.

One early spring day in 1847, Johnny Appleseed came to the house of his friend, William Watt of Fort Wayne. He was tired out, he said, and wanted rest. He went to bed. The next day, cattle broke through the orchard fences of a neighbor. Johnny got out of his sick bed to help mend those fences. In the evening when he came back, his mind was already over the border of this life. He asked to have his bed made beneath the orchard trees. He lay down and went to sleep and died. It was March 11, in the year 1847.

In 1849 Conestoga wagons, become prairie schooners, crossed the western deserts in quest of gold clear to the Pacific Ocean. The white tide had found its western-most limit.

Back in the Ohio country, the orchards in the spring shake out their fragrance. In the fall, the rich fruit thumps the grass. Fountains of memory for Johnny Appleseed.

THE END.